

Back To Basics

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GREAT PEACE HAVE THOSE WHO...

David Eldridge

Everyone searches for peace. Men seek for peace with themselves, with God, and with others. The reason why so many individuals are unable to find peace is because they search where it cannot be found—in the things of this world. Jesus stated, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (Jn. 16:33). Until one looks past the things of this world (where there is tribulation) to the things of God, they will never find nor enjoy true peace. The Lord will give peace to those who...

LOVE GOD’S LAW. David stated, “Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble” (Ps. 119:165). Those who love the law of God are afforded peace by knowing how they might have unity with God. Thus, it is also written, in reference to God’s righteous and true judgments, “More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb” (Ps. 19:10). Do you love God’s law that you might have peace?

TRUST IN THE LORD. Isaiah penned, “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You” (Is. 26:3). The one who will “trust in the name of the Lord and rely upon his God” will find in the

Lord a “refuge” in the storms of life (Is. 50:10; Ps. 62:8). This trusting faith in the Lord is developed by hearing and loving His word (Rom. 10:17). Those who trust in the Lord will be kept by Him in perfect peace. Do you trust in the Lord that you might find the peace He can afford?

OBEY THE LORD. Those who obey the Lord are promised peace. Isaiah 48:18 records, “Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, And your righteousness like the waves of the sea.” If one obeys the Lord, He will grant unto him peace. However, if one refuses to obey God, he will not find peace as he stands opposed to Him (Jas. 4:4). Are you obeying the Lord that you might have peace like a river?

PRAY TO GOD. The child of God finds peace in prayer. Paul wrote, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7). Pray to God and find peace, knowing that He cares for you and will answer (1 Pet. 5:7; 1 Jn. 5:14).

CARMEL, IN
david@davidceldridge.com

WHAT KIND OF DOCTRINE ARE YOU TEACHING?

Larry R. Ping II

It is vitally important that one watches the doctrine he is teaching. The word “doctrine” simply means teaching. Notice some of the following “doctrines” that were being taught in the Scriptures.

THE DOCTRINES OF MEN. Matthew 15:9, Matthew 16:12, and Mark 7:7 all indicate there were men teaching their own doctrines. This cannot be in the Lord’s church. Solomon warned, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 14:12; 16:25). We need to learn once and for all that we cannot improve upon the plan of God. Evil comes as a result of man doing “that which was right in his own eyes” (Jud. 17:6). Let’s all do our best to ensure that what is being taught is from the word of God (1 Pet. 4:11)!

SOUND DOCTRINE. There is teaching that can be classified as “sound doctrine” (1 Tim. 1:10). For doctrine to be sound, it must be based completely and solely upon the word of God. To teach “sound doctrine,” one must be willing to ask the same question as: “have ye not read?” (Mt. 19:4). That is, what does the Bible say? Sound doctrine is used to “convince” false teachers (Ti. 1:9). Be sure your teaching is sound and Biblical.

STRANGE DOCTRINES. The Hebrew author wrote about “strange doctrines” in Hebrews 13:9. We certainly have our share of these types of teachings today. It is strange to hear that faith alone is enough to save a man when the Bible teaches differently (Jas. 2:24). It is odd to be told that once a man is saved he is always saved when the Bible teaches that faithfulness till death is required (Rev. 2:10). It is peculiar to hear men suggest that the six days of creation were actually eons, not days as we know them and as the word of God teaches (Heb. 11:3). I suppose the days of strange doctrines will not soon come to an end. Let us be sure we are not “carried about with every wind of doctrine” and “sleight of men” (Eph. 4:14).

There may be some who are “astonished” (Mk. 1:22) at the doctrine we teach. Yet, there are those who will live “contrary” to God’s doctrine (Rom. 16:17). Even so, we must “Preach the word...” as God intended (2 Tim. 4:2). Which doctrine are you teaching? Let us be the ones that hold high the royal banner of good, sound doctrine. Make the determination here and now to stand fast in the word of God!

MOORESVILLE, IN
lpingii@msn.com

Back To Basics

P.O. Box 251
Ellettsville, IN 47429
1-800-889-0338

mail@bcktobscs.com

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WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS TO THE AGED

John Isaac Edwards

The Scriptures often speak of the aged. “Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore [that’s 80] years old...” (2 Sam. 19:32). The Lord “...taketh away the understanding of the aged” (Job 12:20). “Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment” (Job 32:9). Philemon 9 mentions “...Paul the aged...”

The Scriptures also speak to the aged. Paul wrote Titus, “That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things...” (Ti. 2:2-3). Consider what the Bible says to the aged.

AGED MEN. An aged man is to be:

Sober. He is to be of sound mind. Peter charged, “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober...” (1 Pet. 1:13).

Grave. “The word points to seriousness of purpose and to self-respect in conduct” (*Moule*). He is to be a man of dignity; august and venerable. He is to be serious.

Temperate. He is to exercise self-control. Paul wrote, “And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things...” (1 Cor. 9:25).

Sound in faith, charity, patience. His faith, love, and patience are to be healthy and strong. He is to be a man of conviction and his character is to be such that he can be relied on. His love is to be described in the language of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. He is not to be swerved by sufferings and trials, but is to be steadfast and persevering.

AGED WOMEN. Just as aged men are to be some things, Paul said, “The aged women likewise...”

In behaviour as becometh holiness. An aged woman is to be reverent in her demeanour. She is to “continue in...holiness with sobriety” (1 Tim. 2:15).

Not false accusers. Some are prone to slander and accuse falsely. Older women ought not be gossips or speak evil of others.

Not given to much wine. “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Prov. 20:1).

Teachers of good things. “That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Ti. 2:4-5).

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ARE ALL CHILDREN IN A SAFE PLACE?

Melba Edwards

In a recent ladies Bible class, the question arose, “Are all kids in a safe place?” I could tell from the hand writing it was from a child. Children wonder when it is the right time to be baptized. I asked one of our ladies, Denise Jacobs, if she would address this question in our class. Her approach was to write a letter from a mother to her daughter. Here is the letter:

Dear Sophie:

I want to talk to you about the most important thing you will do in your entire life. I want to talk to you about being baptized. I know you have had questions as to if and when you are old enough to take this step and what God wants you to do.

First of all, you have to realize that no one can tell you the right time. That decision has to be between you and the Lord. To help you make that decision, there are several requirements that we learn from the Bible. So we should start by searching God’s word.

In Mark 16:16, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” From this, we realize that the person who is baptized has to be old enough to believe. This would require that the person be old enough to have listened to the preacher, parents, Bible class teachers, to have read and studied, and to understand what has been taught.

In Acts 2:38, “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” From this passage, we realize that the person must be willing to

repent, or change his/her ways from doing wrong to doing the right thing. This is an act of humility and obedience.

Acts 8:37, “And Phillip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” By this example, we can see that the person has to be old enough to realize that he/she must make the confession that Jesus is the Son of God. The person to be baptized must understand that baptism comes as a love for the Lord. This is another act of being humble and wanting to be obedient.

So, Sophie, to answer your question about when you will be old enough to be baptized: This is an individual and personal decision. There is no set age because everyone is different and ready at different times. The person who is thinking about being baptized must be able to understand, believe, repent, confess Christ, and do those things with love for the Lord. I hope this helps you better understand what God’s law says.

We love you very much,
Mom

It’s the most important decision one will ever make. As one who has not been baptized, keep asking questions. Once you get them all answered, you’ll know the right time to be baptized, remembering there are other things that must be done first. No one can tell you when you are ready. That must be your decision. As a mother, study with your children and help them to understand what the Bible teaches on this subject.

In Few Words

ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL

Three times in the New Testament Paul used the expression, “according to my gospel.” The gospel did not originate with Paul (Gal. 1:11-12). It is “the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my [Paul’s] trust” (1 Tim. 1:11).

God will judge men. Paul wrote, “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Rom. 2:16). The gospel of God reveals a day of accountability for all men. “...for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ...So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:10, 12).

Power to stablish. Paul told the Romans, “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ...” (Rom. 16:25). It is through gospel preaching that folks become “stablished in the faith” (Col. 2:7).

Jesus was raised from the dead. Paul said, “Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel” (2 Tim. 2:8). The gospel Paul preached declared that Jesus “rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

May we live in such a way as to be ready for the judgment to come, be stable and ever remember Jesus was raised from the dead, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

TRAGEDY OR TRIUMPH?

The day of Christ’s coming will be a day of tragedy for some and triumph for others.

Tragedy. Christ will come “in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Th. 1:8). What a tragedy to “be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord...” (2 Th. 1:9).

Triumph. Christ will “come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” (2 Th. 1:10). What a day of triumph for the suffering righteous as God recompenses “tribulation to them that trouble you” (2 Th. 1:6).

A day of tragedy or triumph, which will it be for you?

FUTURE OF THE EARTH: DESTROYED OR PEACEFUL PARADISE?

According to the Authorized Site of the Office of Public Information of Jehovah’s Witnesses, “The earth will never be destroyed or depopulated but will become a peaceful paradise” (www.jw-media.org/beliefs/trueworship.htm). Is this true? What saith the Scripture?

The earth will not always remain. The first book of Moses says, “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Gen. 8:22). This indicates the earth will not always remain.

The earth will pass away. The One who created the earth said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Mt. 24:35). Surely the One who made the earth knows more about the future of the earth than anyone else.

The earth shall perish. Unlike the Lord whose “years shall have no end,” “the earth and the heavens...shall perish” (Ps. 102:25-27, quoted in Heb. 1:10-12).

The earth will be burned up. Peter used the expressions pass away, melt, burned up, and dissolved to teach the annihilation of the earth and all its contents in the coming day of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:10-11).

The hope of God’s people is “laid up...in heaven” (Col. 1:5); not down on earth!

Thru-the-Bible

THE TABERNACLE

EX. 25-28; 30-31; 35-39

JOHN R. GENTRY

After making a covenant with Israel, Jehovah turned His attention to “the pattern of the tabernacle” (Ex. 25:9, 40; Heb. 8:5).

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE TABERNACLE. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they take for me an offering: of every man whose heart maketh him willing ye shall take my offering....And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and brought Jehovah’s offering, for the work of the tent of meeting...” (25:1-9; 35:4-29). “The people [brought] much more than enough for the service of the work which Jehovah commanded...So the people were restrained from bringing” (36:2-7). The Lord has given us work to do and requires our contribution to fund this work (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9). “God loves a cheerful giver.”

CONTENTS OF THE TABERNACLE. While on the mountain, Jehovah gave Moses the pattern, or blueprint, for the tabernacle and all of its contents. *Ark of the Testimony* (25:10-16; 37:1-5). Two poles were to be placed in the rings on opposite sides of the ark in order “to carry the ark by them. The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it” (2 Sam. 6:1-17). The two tablets of the testimony were to be placed inside the ark (Heb. 9:4). *Mercy Seat* (25:17-22; 37:6-9). At the mercy seat, Jehovah told Moses, “I will meet with you...” The LXX refers to the mercy seat as the propitiatory cover (Lev. 16; Rom. 3:25; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10). *Table for the Bread of the Presence or Showbread* (25:23-

30; 37:10-16). The table was to have fresh bread on it constantly. *Lampstand or Candlestick* (25:31-40; 37:17-24; 27:20-21). A very elaborate and extensive plan was given for the lampstand. Jehovah reemphasized the need to make these things according to the pattern. *Tabernacle* (26:1-37; 35:30-36:38). The tabernacle itself was 45 feet by 15 feet. Boards for the walls were designed to be taken down and erected as needed. Four layers covered the top of the tabernacle: 1) fine twined linen, 2) goats’ hair, 3) rams’ skins, 4) badgers’ skins, sealskins. The veil within the tabernacle separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. *Altar of Bronze* (27:1-8; 38:1-7). Here burnt offerings were to be made. *Courtyard of the Tabernacle* (27:9-19; 38:9-20). The courtyard was 150 feet long by 75 feet wide by 7.5 feet tall. *Altar of Incense* (30:1-10; 37:25-29). Aaron was to burn incense every morning. He was to “make atonement on its horns once a year.” *Basin of Bronze* (30:17-21; 38:8). Before performing certain priestly duties, Aaron and his sons were to “wash their hands and their feet, so that they may not die.” *Priests’ Garments* (28:1-43; 39:1-43). The priests were to wear special garments while performing priestly duties. Jehovah made certain that their nakedness was not exposed by someone seeing their thighs. A *Census Tax* was taken as a ransom and atonement for all the people age 20 or older (30:11-16; 38:25-26). Regulations for the *Oil of Anointing and Incense* were given in 30:22-38, and for the *Sabbath* in 31:12-18; 35:1-3.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE. Jehovah appointed Bezalel and Oholiab to lead the people in making the tabernacle (31:1-11; 35:30-39:43). “According to all that Jehovah had commanded Moses, so the people of Israel had done all the work.”

GREENVILLE, IN
johnrgentry@sbcglobal.net



RULES FOR THE SACRIFICES

LEV. 1-7; NUM. 15

KEITH WELCH

Mosaic law consisted of certain sacrifices and God set the rules for them. We shall consider a brief overview of rules for the five major sacrifices.

BURNT OFFERING. God required this kind of sacrifice to be of the herd or flocks. It must be a male without blemish and of one's "free will." The offering must be killed, skinned, and cut into pieces. The priest shall sprinkle the blood all around on the altar, put fire on the altar, and lay the wood in order on the fire. The priests "shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that is on the altar." Further, "he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water." The entire animal, save the skin, was to be burnt and this made "a sweet aroma to the Lord." If poor, one could sacrifice of the birds, either a turtle-dove or young pigeon. It was to be prepared as God directed and entirely burnt (Lev. 1:1-17). God commanded Aaron and his sons, "A fire shall always be burning on the altar; it shall never go out" (Lev. 6:13).

MEAL OFFERING. Divine authority called for this sacrifice to be fine flour, unleavened, and mixed with oil. It could not contain honey and was to be seasoned with salt. It was to be brought to "Aaron's sons, the priests, one of whom shall take from it his handful of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. And the priest shall burn it as a memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord. The rest of the grain offering shall be Aaron's and his sons..." (Lev. 2:1-16; 6:14-23).

PEACE OFFERING. Here God authorized any animal without defect from herd or flock. "He shall...kill it...sprinkle its blood all around on the altar...its fat and the whole fat tail which he shall remove close to the backbone. And the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; and the priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made by fire to the Lord." God gave further instructions if offered as thanksgiving or vow offering. This is the only offering in which the offerer shared (Lev. 3; 7:11-21, 28-34; 19:5-8; 22:29-30).

SIN OFFERING. Divine rules are given to persons who sin unintentionally against any of the commands of the Lord. An unintentional sin by high priest or congregation requires the sacrifice of young bull. Unintentional sin by leader requires male goat without blemish. A common person shall sacrifice a female goat or lamb. The poor must bring a dove or pigeon to be offered. For the very poor, God allowed a tenth of an ephah of fine flour (Lev. 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30).

TRESPASS OFFERING. "A ram of different degrees of value, and worth at least two shekels, was the usual victim, and it must be accompanied by full restitution with an additional fifth of the value of the damage. The leper and Nazirite could offer he-lambs. The guilt toward God was expiated by the blood poured out, and the guilt toward men by the restitution and fine" (*International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Biblesoft*) (Lev. 5:14-6:7; 7:1-7).

HOBART, INDIANA
kjewelch@yahoo.com

Thru-the-Bible

THE WORSHIP IS SET IN ORDER

EX. 40; LEV. 8-10; 24:10-16; 23; NUM. 7, 9

DAVID HALBROOK

God's order is seen as He "set in order" Israel's worship. It may have seemed to them like a conglomeration of various rituals, articles and formalities, while in reality every aspect of their worship was a part of the shadow of the good things to come, thus necessitating that all be done according to the pattern (Heb. 9:9; 8:5).

YOU SHALL (EX. 40). One year after leaving Egypt, preparations are made for the tabernacle and priesthood. God gives Moses a lengthy list of orders. In verses 2-15, the words "you shall" are a constant. Within this list is the purification of Aaron and his sons by washing of water allowing them to serve as priests. In response to every "you shall," we find that Moses "did; according to all that the Lord had commanded" (vv. 16, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32).

THE LORD COMMANDED (LEV. 8). This chapter chronicles the actual consecration of the tabernacle and priesthood as commanded in Exodus 40. As the nation of Israel assembles, they watched as every detail of the consecration process was carefully followed. Why was this necessary? Because, as is stated ten times in this chapter, the Lord commanded it.

THEY BROUGHT THEIR OFFERING (NUM. 7). When the tabernacle and its furnishings had been sanctified, the people showed their commitment to this work by giving a generous donation to support this worthy work. It involved carts, oxen, bulls, rams, lambs, goats, silver, gold, and food. What a heartfelt offering and sacrifice!

AARON BEGINS HIS WORK (LEV. 9). After waiting, as the Lord commanded (Lev. 8), Aaron could begin his work as a high priest. He butchered the animals on the proper altar for the sins of Israel (including his own). What a gory task, which demonstrated God's disgust of sin. God's approval of this was shown by sending fire to consume the offerings. Today, Christ is our spotless high priest who sacrificed Himself as the sin offering for all the world (Heb. 7:26-28).

NADAB & ABIHU (LEV. 10). In Leviticus 9, fire from God showed approval. In chapter ten, the "unauthorized fire" (v. 2) of Aaron's sons brought a devouring fire from God. What is unauthorized fire? Fire "which He had not commanded them" (v. 2). Some scorn the idea that God's silence communicates His will concerning orderly, authorized worship. Nadab and Abihu beg to differ.

A BLASPHEMER DIES (LEV. 24:10, 16, 23). God's commands applied to everyday life, including personal speech (not just worship). During a fight, God's name was blasphemed resulting in the death of the blasphemer "as the Lord commanded" (v. 23).

THE PASSOVER (NUM. 9). God's order provided this remembrance of the blood of the spotless lamb was kept in the memory of Israel and the shadow of good things to come was cast (Ex. 12). Those who missed the Passover due to uncleanness or travel were allowed to observe it during the second month of the year (v. 11). God continued guiding Israel in their journey toward Canaan by the cloud, or appearance of fire (vv. 16, 23).

JAMESTOWN, IN
davidhalbrook@hotmail.com



CLEAN AND UNCLEAR

LEV. 11-15; NUM. 19

SHANE WILLIAMS

A common theme throughout the Scriptures is: “be holy; for I am holy” (Lev. 11:44). When God says something, we are to follow as we strive to be like Him. This applies to the new covenant as well (1 Pet. 1:15-16). In Leviticus 11-15 and Numbers 19, God tells Israel what is clean and unclean. The reason given for this was simple: “For I am the Lord your God” (Lev. 11:44).

ANIMALS FOR FOOD. Israel could eat of the animals which had a split hoof (divided) and chewed cud. The emphasis is placed on an animal doing both (Lev. 11:3). Only those would be considered clean. If unclean, they were not to even touch such an animal (v. 8). For a fish to be clean, it must have fins and scales. If not, it was abhorrent to them. God was specific with birds, insects, reptiles, etc (vv. 13-30). He also instructs them on what is to be done if an unclean animal touches something else (vv. 32-43).

UNCLEANNES AFTER CHILDBIRTH. The mother was unclean after childbirth; seven days if she bore a son and fourteen days if she bore a daughter (Lev. 12). A purification period of thirty-three days had to pass before she could be fully cleansed after bearing a son (sixty-six days if she bore a daughter). During this time, she could not enter the sanctuary or touch any consecrated thing (v. 4). At the end of this period, a burnt offering and a sin offering were to be taken to the priest. This consisted of a one year old lamb and a young pigeon or turtledove. If they were poor,

they could bring two pigeons or turtledoves. This is how we know the parents of the Lord were poor, for they brought two pigeons or turtledoves (Lk. 2:24).

LEPROSY. In Leviticus 13:1-43, the text gives the procedure for determining leprosy. It was the priest who was to pronounce one as clean or unclean. Even garments were to be examined and deemed as clean or unclean (vv. 47-59). A leper would have to remain outside the camp (Lev. 13:45-46). For the leper who was healed of his leprosy, there was a law for his cleansing. Again the priest would examine him to determine his status. There were several offerings which had to take place for the cleansing: grain offering, guilt offering, wave offering, sin offering, and a burnt offering (Lev. 14:10-32). Laws concerning a leprous house were also given in Leviticus 14:33-57.

DISCHARGE. Leviticus 15 gives instruction concerning those with a bodily discharge. They were unclean. God specifies the time period of uncleanness for each type of discharge and the required offerings to be made. The purpose of this is given in Leviticus 15:31, “...lest they die in their uncleanness by their defiling My tabernacle that is among them.”

PURIFICATION. The seriousness of being clean is stressed in Numbers 19. The procedure is given to be purified. Anyone who ignored this law defiled the tabernacle and would be cut off from Israel (Num. 19:13, 20).

KEWANEE, MO

shanewms@sheltonbbs.com

MASONRY: A FALSE RELIGION

James Hahn

Freemasonry is seen by many in our society as a very caring, benevolent organization that provides wonderful services through their various homes and hospitals. The thought of Masonry being considered a religion just doesn't cross the minds of some and even if it does, with the attitude that prevails today, they would say, "So what."

Most members of the Masonic Lodge would have you believe that Masonry is a secret order and that those outside the lodge can not know the "secrets" of the order. This is certainly not the case. The writings of such men as Albert Pike (*Morals and Dogma*) and Albert Mackey (*Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*) reveal the teaching and practices of Freemasonry and are available to all. I have letters in my files from the Grand Lodge in Kentucky confirming that the writings of these men, in their words, "are standard and are recommended." In this article, I will give brief quotes from the writings of these men along with statements from the Kentucky Monitor, the handbook of Masonry in the state of Kentucky, to show that not only is Masonry a religion, but a false religion that no Christian can be a part of.

MASONRY IS A RELIGION. "Every Masonic Lodge is a temple of religion; and its teachings are instruction in religion" (*Morals and Dogma*; p. 213). "Freemasonry is a religious institution" (*Ency. of Freemasonry*; Vol. 2, p. 792). "Freemasonry, then is indeed a religious institution; and on this ground mainly, if not alone, should the religious Freemason defend it" (*Ency. of Freemasonry*; Vol. 2, p. 848).

MASONRY TEACHES A NEW BIRTH. "...the life of Masonry. It is a symbol of the agonies of the first death and of the throes of a new birth. There you stood without our portals, on the threshold of

this new Masonic life, in darkness, helplessness, and ignorance....you came inquiringly to our doors, seeking the new birth...For initiation is, as it were, a death to the world and a resurrection to a new life" (*Kentucky Monitor*, p. 26).

MASONRY TEACHES HIRAM AS MEDIATOR. "All believed in a future life,...; and in a Mediator or Redeemer, by whom the Evil Principle was to be overcome and the Supreme Deity reconciled to His creatures. The belief was general that He was to be born of a virgin and suffer a painful death. The Hindus called him Krishna; the Chinese, Kioun-tse; the Persians, Sosiosch; the Chaldeans, Dhovanai; the Egyptians, Horus; Plato, Love; the Scandinavians, Balder; Christians, Jesus; Masons, Hiram" (*Kentucky Monitor*, p. xv).

MASONRY CONDONES FALSE RELIGIONS. "If Freemasonry were simply a Christian institution, the Jew and the Moslem, the Brahman and the Buddhist, could not conscientiously partake of its illumination; but its universality is its boast. In its language, citizens of every nation may converse; at its altar men of all religions may kneel; to its creed, disciples of every faith may subscribe" (*Ency. of Freemasonry*; Vol. 1, p. 579). "Masonry, around whose altars the Christian, the Hebrew, the Moslem, the Brahmin, the followers of Confucius and Zoroaster, can assemble as brethren and unite in prayer to the one God who is above all the Baalim, must needs leave it to each of its Initiates to look for the foundation of his faith and hope to the written scriptures of his own religion" (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 226).

MASONRY DENIES THE ONE AND ONLY TRUE GOD. "The qualities of God are admitted, and affirmed to be real; and it is a mere change of name to call the possessor of those qualities, Nature,

and not God. The real question is, whether such Qualities exist, as we call God; and not, by what particular name we shall designate the Qualities. One man may call the sum total of these Qualities, Nature; another, Heaven; a third, Universe, a fourth, Matter; a fifth, Spirit; a sixth, God, Theos, Zeus, Alfadir, Allah, or what he pleases. ... The name is of the smallest consequence” (*Morals and Dogma*; p. 644).

MASONRY DENIES THE BIBLE AS THE ONLY INSPIRED WORD OF GOD. “The Bible is used among Freemasons as a symbol of the will of God, however it may be expressed. Therefore, whatever to any people expresses that will may be used as a substitute for the Bible in a Masonic Lodge. Thus, in a Lodge consisting entirely of Jews, the Old Testament alone may be placed upon the altar, and Turkish Freemasons make use of the Koran. Whether it be the Gospels to the Christians, the Pentateuch to the Israelite, the Koran to the Musulman, or the Vedas to the Brahman, it everywhere Masonically conveys the same idea—that of the symbolism of the Divine Will revealed to man.” (*Ency. of Freemasonry, Vol. 1, p. 133*).

MASONRY TEACHES THAT ONLY MASONS WILL BE SAVED. “Let him who toils complain not, nor feel humiliated! Let him look up, and see his fellow-workmen there, in God’s Eternity; they alone surviving there. Even in the weak human memory they long survive, as Saints, as Heroes, and as Gods: they alone survive, and people the unmeasured solitudes of Time” (*Morals and Dogma*; p. 343).

In speaking of the Spirit of Masonry, Carl H. Claudy said, “I am a way of common men to God” (*Kentucky Monitor*, p. xxi). Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn. 14:6).

Friends, don’t be deceived. Masonry is a false religion. You cannot be a follower of Christ and be a part of such. In this article, we have given only a brief summary of some of the teachings of Masonry. However, these should be sufficient for any seeker of truth to see that a Christian has no place in such an organization.

BELLEVILLE, IN
jghahn@sbcglobal.net

THE REDEEMED TEAM

*Paul Adams * Ellettsville, IN * pda@pex.net*

The 2008 Summer Olympics have just concluded. The men’s basketball event was once again dominated by the United States after a few years of disappointing performances. This was the team to bring back the gold to the U.S. and was nicknamed, “The Redeem Team.” They were superstars, setting their egos aside, working together for a common purpose; to win the gold medal and restore the United States’ glory in the sport of basketball.

It occurs to me that Christians today, being the redeemed of God, could be described as **The Redeemed Team**. “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things...but with the precious blood of Christ...” (1 Pet. 1:18-19). This makes us The Redeemed Team. The realization of the great price of our redemption should motivate us to live a life of faithfulness.

As the redeemed of God, we should be willing to set aside our own will and work together so that in all things Christ might have the preeminence (Col. 1:18). Those who expect to be crowned must be faithful and compete according to the rules (2 Tim. 2:5). Let us have a common purpose: to win the gold (go to Heaven, Rev. 21:21) and to bring as many with us as we can. May we look forward to when all the redeemed hear the Lord’s anthem, “Well done...enter into the joy of thy Lord” (Mt. 25:21).

ARE THERE CHRISTIANS IN THE DENOMINATIONS?

Joe R. Price

This article will offend some people. That is not our intent. However, it happens whenever people love the darkness of error more than the light of truth (Jn. 3:19-21).

Denominationalism is not from God. Jesus built one church, which is His one body, “the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Mt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4). The gospel of Christ condemns religious division: Christ is not divided (Jn. 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10-13). One is not following Jesus Christ when he practices what Jesus opposes. If God approves of denominationalism, we would find clear and convincing Scriptures that teach it. We do not.

Christians are disciples of Jesus Christ (Acts 11:26). A disciple learns and follows the will of His Master—Jesus (Lk. 6:40). Since Jesus never taught, endorsed or encouraged denominationalism, one is not following Jesus when he engages in it; he is sinning (Col. 3:17).

Jesus adds saved people to His church, not to denominations (Acts 2:47). Christ does not count among the saved those who teach and practice the errors of denominationalism; the Lord knows those who are His (2 Tim. 2:16-19).

If there are saved people—Christians—in the denominations, these conclusions follow:

DENOMINATIONALISM MAKES THE GOSPEL PLAN OF SALVATION UNNECESSARY. Denominations do not preach and practice the Bible plan of salvation (believe, confess faith, repent and be baptized, Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:37-38; 8:5, 12, 36-38; Rom. 10:9-10). If there are Christians in denominations, then people can be saved without obeying the gospel (which is false, Mt. 7:21-23).

DENOMINATIONALISM MAKES THE CHURCH OF CHRIST UNNECESSARY. The New Testament

teaches the church is essential to God’s eternal purpose of redemption (Eph. 3:10-11). God is glorified “in the church by Christ Jesus” (Eph. 3:21). Yet, the denominations say one can be saved without being a member of their denomination. True enough, and therefore, denominations admit they are not essential. When one is saved, the Lord adds him to the church, the blood-bought body of the redeemed (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23).

DENOMINATIONALISM MAKES CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH FUTILE AND FACTIOUS. If Christians are in denominations, should we not embrace them as brethren instead of contending against their error (Jude 3-4)? The error of “Christians in the denominations” silences the Bible call to contend for the faith and to hold fast the pattern of sound words. Instead, we are told there are many faiths and God accepts them all (2 Tim. 1:13; Eph. 4:5).

DENOMINATIONALISM MAKES FELLOWSHIP WITH ERROR ACCEPTABLE. The New Testament teaches Christians not to have fellowship with error (Eph. 5:11). To suggest that false churches practicing error contain saved people (Christians) is a denial of every verse that warns against having fellowship with error (2 Jn. 9-11; Gal. 1:6-10; 2 Cor. 6:14-18).

Are there Christians in the denominations? No. Only the gospel of Christ will save them (Rom. 1:16-17; Col. 2:8).

FERNDALE, WA
joe@bibleanswer.com

**“...COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM, AND BE YE SEPARATE, SAITH THE LORD...”
(2 COR. 5:17).**

THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL

Heath Robertson

In 1957, Connie and Bobbie Adams made their way to Norway to preach the word of God. A few dedicated souls have followed in their footsteps over the last fifty-one years to live in a nation far from their own in distance and culture. We are accustomed to our brethren speaking of poverty-stricken people who have been oppressed by governments or man-made religious institutions. To God's glory, His word has had much success in those places. However, Scandinavia is much rougher ground for that precious seed (Mk. 4:3-8). It is a place full of wealth, humanism, and the desire for most anything except spiritual things. My wife, who was born and raised in Norway while her father (Terrell Bunting) and grandfather (Tom Bunting) preached there, and I plan to move to Norway to continue the work. Why, some might ask, would we waste more time on a nation who is comfortably ungodly? I will offer you three reasons that motivate me:

CHRIST COMMANDED THAT THE GOSPEL BE PREACHED TO "ALL NATIONS" (MT. 28:19). It is not for us to decide who is worthy of having the opportunity to hear the gospel message. Praise God that decision was not in the hands of men in the first century. It was the will of God that the gospel, first preached in Jerusalem, spread to "the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The gospel was preached to "every creature under heaven" (Col. 1:23) because the disciples understood their mission was to warn and teach "every man" and to present "every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28). It is to that goal that we must put all our effort.

WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO OUR BRETHREN. We would expect, after fifty years of work, to find many more Christians than the twenty or so you will find in Norway. However, those familiar with this work rejoice with great excitement upon

hearing of one soul who would deny nation, family, and friends to obey Christ. We have brothers and sisters in Scandinavia who have a need to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord" (2 Pet. 3:18). Many of the teachings we receive as children, these first generation Christians are hungering for, and in this worldly nation will die without. We must bear this "burden" with them (Gal. 6:2) and contribute to their needs (Rom. 12:13).

PAUL BELIEVED IN THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL AND SO DO I. In fact, he believed so strongly in its power that he was "eager" to preach the gospel in the worldly, wicked city of Rome. He risked his life to preach there. We find many great things as a result of his faith. Some Jews "believed" on account of hearing Paul preach in Rome (Acts 28:24). Many others heard the gospel because he had opportunity to preach the word of God with all "boldness and without hindrance" (Acts 28:30, 31). As Paul writes to the brethren at Philippi from prison in Rome, he sends greetings from Christians that are with him "especially those of Caesar's household" (Phil. 4:21, 22). How amazing! Because Paul was "eager" to preach in Rome (Rom. 1:15), we even find Christians among Caesar's household.

Brethren, I am eager to preach the gospel to those who are in Scandinavia. I have been granted my work permit and all that is lacking is some of our monthly support and moving expenses. If you are eager to help us continue this good work and not lose that progress that has been made through over fifty years of hard work by faithful men, please contact us. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all.

MANCHESTER, TN
newdaygtr@yahoo.com

Kids Activity Page

Aleisha Edwards

Respect

"Respect" means to hold in esteem or honor. The Bible teaches many lessons about respect. Here are some we need to learn to respect.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

RESPECT for GOD

"We ought to _____ God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

RESPECT for PARENTS

"Children _____ your parents in the Lord: for this is right.
_____ thy father and mother" (Eph. 6:1-2).

RESPECT for AUTHORITY

"Let every soul be _____ unto the higher powers..." (Rom. 13:1).

RESPECT for ELDERS

"You shall _____ up before the _____ headed
and _____ the presence of an old man..." (Lev. 19:32).

RESPECT for SELF

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore _____ God in
your _____, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20).

"Suffer the little children to come unto me,
and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).

THINGS TO FOLLOW

Ryan Thomas

The New Testament speaks of several things we are to follow. To follow after something means to accept, pursue, and practice that thing. A couple of key phrases along this line are found in 1 Timothy 6:11 and 2 Timothy 2:22. Let's examine a few of these items together.

RIGHTEOUSNESS. Over the years, men have attempted to redefine righteousness to fit their own carnal definition of the term. However, that does not change the real meaning of it. We are told that the commandments of God "are righteousness" in Psalm 119:172. The commandments of God, for Christians, are contained in the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). Only by living according to the gospel can it be said that one is following after righteousness.

GODLINESS. Godliness means to conform one's life to the laws of God. We can never be perfect but when we stumble we can ask for forgiveness and continue following that straight and narrow pathway "which leadeth unto life" (Mt. 7:14).

FAITH. True Bible faith is not zapped into one's heart through some supernatural process, but is rather based upon the word of God (Heb. 11). Paul said, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Faith is produced in the heart by reading and studying God's word. One must "give diligence" in order to have a stronger and deeper faith (2 Tim. 2:15).

LOVE. It is easy to love those who love you, but true love involves loving one's foes as well as one's friends (Mt. 5:44-46). Furthermore, true love is demonstrated through actions and deeds, not just words (1 Jn. 3:18). Christ said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (Jn. 14:15). If you haven't done what Jesus has commanded, your love for Him is lacking.

PATIENCE. This is exhibited by the ability to persevere through difficult times and to remain firm and steadfast even though results may not be immediately visible. Jesus said, "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Lk. 21:19). In order to make it to heaven, we must all develop a spirit of patience (Heb. 6:11-12). Stay strong brother, it won't be much longer and your patience will be rewarded (Jas. 5:8)!

MEEKNESS. Contrary to the thinking of many, meekness does not mean weakness. Meekness carries with it the idea of strength that is God-controlled (Ti. 3:2).

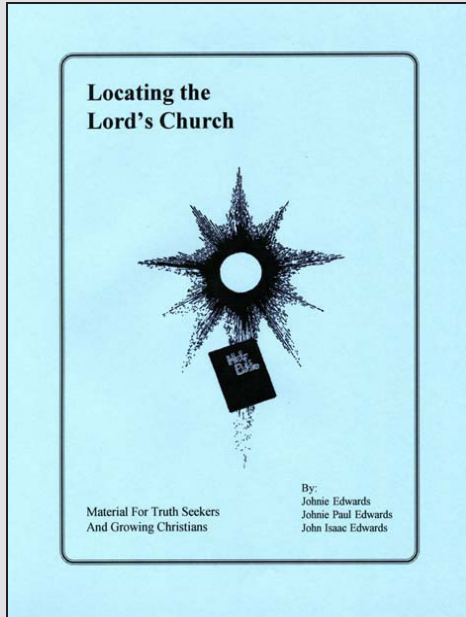
PEACE. Like most people, we desire peace and tranquility in our homes and communities. A Christian should never resort to using violence when such can be avoided (Rom. 12:18-19). God's people are spoken of in Scripture as being peacemakers (Mt. 5:9). In Christianity, the battle against Satan occurs in the hearts and minds of men, not in the flesh (2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:12). Peace in the church is achieved when we are united together in the truth of the gospel (1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:1-6). True peace is only available in Christ (Jn. 16:33).

CHRIST. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (Jn. 14:6). Following Jesus is the only way you can make it to heaven! But, in order to follow Jesus, one must conquer his own fleshly wants and desires. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mt. 16:24). We never know what may be in store for us in this life (Jn. 21:18-22). All we can do is trust in the Lord and follow Him!

MEXIA, TX
thomasr55@hotmail.com

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