

April 2014



## In This Issue

Question from Nigeria about  
Melchizedek  
(Keith Sharp)

Romans the Eighth Chapter (9)  
(Elmer Moore)

Jamaica Patois Wisdom (14)  
(Jefferson David Tant)

The Beatitudes (4)  
(Patrick Farish)

Overcoming Trials In Life : Job  
& His Wife  
(William J. Stewart)

Those Who Gladly Received  
His Word  
(Sean P. Cavender)

Not too far from Judas  
(Tanner Campbell)

Christian Women  
(Mike Thomas)

A Discussion of the  
Benevolent Work of the  
Church  
(Keith Sharp)



*Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things. (Philippians 4:8)*

You can read all of this month's MOTT content in the e-mail message below, but you can also download a copy to your computer to save or print out a hard copy by clicking [HERE](#).



Previous issues of MOTT can be downloaded [HERE](#).

In my opinion the greatest American President was Abraham Lincoln. As the burdens of a terrible Civil War in which somewhere between 620,000 and 850,000 American soldiers from both sides died weighed upon his spirit, he delivered his second inaugural address on March 4th, 1865. Thirty-two days later he lay dead from an assassin's bullet in his brain. What is remarkable to me about his second inaugural is his faith in God and his tender compassion for his enemies. O, that all government leaders would be moved by these twin attitudes. I reproduce here the last paragraph of that remarkably short speech. (That's a good example for both politicians and preachers)

*With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.*  
([www.bartleby.com/124/pres32.html](http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres32.html))

## QUESTION FROM NIGERIA ABOUT MELCHIZEDEK

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

### Question

Who is actually Melchisedec. Is He also God?

## Answer

Melchizedek is first mentioned in Genesis 14:17-20. Abram was returning from rescuing his nephew Lot by defeating Chederlaomer, king of Elam, and the other kings with him, who had conquered the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela and carried off spoils of war and captives, including Lot. On his return, Abram came to Salem (later Jerusalem), where its king, Melchizedek, who was also "priest of God Most High," met him and blessed him (Genesis 14:18-20). Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth (tithe) of the best of the spoils he had rescued (verse 20).

David declares of the Christ, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4). It is to this prophecy that the Hebrew writer refers (Hebrews 5:6,10; 6:20). The author of Hebrews spends the entire seventh chapter arguing the superiority of this priesthood (order of Melchizedek) to the priesthood of the order of Aaron.

Melchizedek was a real person, and the Hebrew writer makes an allegorical argument based on him, just as Paul did about Sarah, Isaac, Hagar, and Ishmael in Galatians 4:21-31. In several regards Melchizedek is a type of Christ. This means he was a "model" or "pattern" (Mounce. 1295), "a figure or representation of something to come" (Dungan. 359) for Christ (cf. Romans 5:14). As the entire Old Covenant was a "shadow" of the New (Hebrews 8:5), Melchizedek foreshadowed Christ. This foreshadowing pertains to their offices.

The inspired record saying nothing of the genealogy of Melchizedek, nor does it mention his death. This doesn't mean he literally had no parents or didn't actually die. But so far his office as priest and king, there is no record of his genealogy or death. In this regard He is like Christ. The Lord's priesthood does not depend on descent from Aaron as did the priesthood of the Law of Moses (Exodus 28:1-3). In fact, Jesus was of the tribe of Judah (Hebrews 7:14). And Christ abides a priest forever (Hebrews 7:23-24).

No, Melchizedek is not God. He was a human king and priest. The intentional silence of the divine record concerning his parentage and death, whereas he exercised both the offices of king and priest, makes him an ideal type of Christ.

## Works Cited

- Dungan, D.R., **Heremeneutics.**
- Mounce, William, **Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words.**

In Romans 8:14, Paul introduces the passage with the word "for...". I believe that this word suggests a continuation of previous thoughts, and suggests a reason for what he had just affirmed. He has affirmed that the one who puts to death the deeds of the body would live, i.e. be in a saved condition serving God. He lives because he is being led by the Spirit of God and is thus a son of God (verse 14).

What does it mean to be "led by the Spirit of God"? It certainly does not suggest that one is being dragged by the Spirit whether he wants to follow or not. In the immediate context Paul has identified the man who is "walking after the Spirit" (verse 4). He is minding the things of the Spirit (verse 5), being subject to the law of God (verse 7), and the Spirit of God dwells in him (verse 9) \*(see previous articles). It seems obvious that these phrases are describing the one who is being led by the Spirit. The Spirit's law (verse 2), gives direction and this man is following those directions and is thus being "led by the Spirit of God." Surely no one thinks that one could be insubordinate to the Law of God and be led by the Spirit at the same time. Thus, to be led by the Spirit is to be living a life in conformity with the word of God, the Spirit's Law.

There is no difference between the man who is "walking after the Spirit," "minding the things of the Spirit," is subordinate to the Law of God, and in whom the "Spirit of God dwells" and the man who is being "led by the Spirit of God." These expressions describe the same man and the same conduct. The context demands this.

This passage declares, "as many as." This expression suggests the idea of "no more or no less." Thus, the writer declares that no more or no less than those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Thus, only those who walk after the Spirit by minding the things of the Spirit and are being subordinate to the Law of God are said to be "sons of God."

In verse 15, Paul declares, "For ye received not the spirit of bondage **again** unto fear, but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." There are those who read the New Testament who assume that every time they see the word "spirit" that this is talking about the Holy Spirit. They then decide that it is either talking about Holy Spirit Baptism, or about the actual indwelling of the Spirit in one's physical body. This is an unwarranted conclusion. Sometimes the word "Spirit" is named for His Law (see Romans 8:2 and Hebrews 3:7 for instance). There are many other passages, too numerous to mention in this article, that show more than one usage of the word "spirit." Sometimes

the word "Spirit" is named to indicate an attitude or disposition of mind just as we used the word (cf. Romans 11:8). The use of the upper or lower case is not the criteria to use. We must look at how the word is used in any given instance.

How is the word used in verse 15 when the writer declares, "ye received not the spirit of bondage" and he also uses the statement, "spirit of adoption"? Paul writes, "Ye received not the spirit of bondage **again** unto fear." The word again suggests a previous state or condition. Under the law they were in the state of a slavery or servitude. This state produced fear or alarm, and he declares that they **now** have a spirit of adoption. Adoption indicates taking one who does not belong to ones own house and treating him as his own son. They serve God because they are His children (verse 14), and address Him as their Father.

The expression "Abba" simply means Father. Repetition (Abba, Father) is used for emphasis. The same thought is expressed in Galatians 4:6-7 where the writer declares, "And because ye are sons God sent for the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son..." They should have a disposition or attitude of sonship and serve God as His children and not as mere slaves.

Paul writes that they should not have a disposition or attitude of bondage or slavery that causes one to serve out of fear; but rather have a disposition or attitude of those who have been adopted as God's children and serve with faithful love and affection.

Thus, Paul declares that we must be led by the Spirit of God to be sons of God. When we are led by the Spirit of God, we are serving God as a child should serve his father and not as a slave serving a master.

---

## JAMAICA PATOIS WISDOM (No. 14)

Jefferson David Tant | Roswell, Georgia, USA

The Jamaican Patois dialect is colorful, unique and humorous. It is my desire to share some of the philosophy shown in this mix of colorful phrases that are witty as well as thought-provoking. I hope the readers both profit and enjoy. In my quarter-century plus of teaching there, I have come to appreciate some things about their culture. – Jefferson David Tant

**Patois:** Scornful dog eat dutty puddin'

**English:** A scornful dog will eat dirty pudding

**Meaning:** Don't behave as if you are better than others or you may fall and be the laughing stock.

Children play “King of the Hill.” This is a game where you stand on a mound, and playmates then try to push you off so another can take the place of “honor.” It’s fun, even though sometimes rough and tumble. Sadly, for some, the “King of the Hill” mentality continues into adulthood. Someone has to be “top dog,” even in the church. The temptation may exist even among those thought to be godly men. Or mothers! Remember when “...the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, bowing down and making a request of Him. And He said to her, ‘What do you wish?’ She said to Him, “Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on Your right and one on Your left” (Matthew 20:21-22).

Are some so little in their own eyes that they think the only way to be important is to puff themselves up? Do you know what happens to balloons when they get too full of air? They explode! And then they are deflated and good for nothing! Would that have an application from Solomon’s admonition that “A man’s pride will bring him low, But a humble spirit will obtain honor” (Proverbs 29:23).

Too many times have I seen situations where two preachers cannot work together. Someone has to be the chief preacher. I have even known of preachers making the statement that “This is my church.” I was not aware that they had sacrificed themselves and shed their own blood to purchase the church. There are other situations where a preacher may claim leadership over a whole area in some nation, and other preachers are obligated to go to him for their support or for permission to do this or that.

Is anything more opposed to the spirit of Christ than such attitudes? We claim we are disciples of Christ. A disciple is one who follows or imitates his teacher. So, what does the teacher say? “But Jesus called them to Himself and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many’” (Matthew 20:25-28).

But not only preachers have this spirit. This “greatest in the kingdom” malady is no respecter of persons, and can afflict anyone in the church. Do you really want to be great? Do you really want respect? Christ gave us the formula.

*“At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, ‘Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, The real test of character and said, ‘Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven’”*

(Matthew 18:1-4)

*"When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this man,' and then in disgrace you proceed to occupy the last place. But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will have honor in the sight of all who are at the table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:8-11).*

*"A man's pride will bring him low, But a humble spirit will obtain honor" (Prov. 29:23).*

If you want honor, don't seek it, and you won't be a "scornful dog eating dutty pudding."

---

## THE BEATITUDES (4)

Patrick Farish | Lancaster, Texas, USA

*"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6)*

Hunger and thirst are strong desires. If we get hungry, we are aware of the need for food; whether we are really in a starving mode, or just catering to a yen for something to chew on. Thirst is a little bit different: we can come to a point of near-dehydration that has the potential to be really harmful to our bodies, our physical well-being.

Thus, Jesus picks our strongest physical needs to underscore the ultimate value of righteousness. To be "righteous" is to be just, neither falling short nor going beyond the standard of the will of God. Paul will write that in the gospel is revealed the righteousness of God (Romans 1:17).

We will not be coerced into righteousness. While God is "not wishing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9), righteousness is still keyed to the attitude, the desire, of man. And the promise of God is, "they shall be satisfied" who are driven, as by hunger or thirst, to be righteous. Whatever might be the question, as to ability to withstand (1 Corinthians 10:13), or to know truth (John 7:17), God supplies it – if man will reach for it.

---

## OVERCOMING TRIALS IN LIFE

**Job & His Wife | Job 1-2; 19; 31**

from the e-book, *"...And They Shall Become One Flesh..."*

William J. Stewart | Kingston, Ontario, Canada

*And he said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. (Job 1:21)*

### **Dealing With Loss**

Job and his wife were wonderfully blessed with children and possessions. Their blessings are described as:

*"...seven sons and three daughters ... seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East." (Job 1:2-3)*

Job is revealed to be a spiritual man (Job 1:1, 5). In fact, God set Job before Satan as being among the greatest of His servants (Job 1:7-8; 2:3). We know nothing of his wife's spiritual focus prior to their tragedy, but she was definitely negative about faith after trials came.

A great day of calamity came their way. In a single day:

- Sabeans stole Job's oxen and donkeys, killing the servants who were with them (Job 1:14-15).
- Fire came from heaven and burned up Job's sheep and the servants with them (Job 1:16).
- Chaldeans stole Job's camels, and killed the servants who were with them (Job 1:17).
- A great wind toppled the house of Job's oldest son, and all his children perished inside the house (Job 1:18-19).
- And then on a subsequent day, Satan struck Job with boils from head to toe (Job 2:7).

Job and his wife had lost almost all their possessions, all of their children, and Job's health. Consider the difference in how they responded to such adversity. Job did not understand what was going on, but he would not accuse God of wrongdoing. Whether he had plenty or little, he would still acknowledge the greatness of God (Job 1:21). His wife was not of the same mind. Her words are words of anger, words of disdain for both her husband and the LORD (Job 2:9). The implication of her statement is that Job's faith was in vain - Job, why be faithful to a God who would allow such calamity to come upon you? Job defended God, and his faith in the LORD,

*"Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" (Job 2:10)*

Losses are never easy to bear, whether it be the loss of loved ones, of possessions, of employment, etc.. Our ability to endure such things successfully will be determined by the degree of faith which we have - how well do we understand the eternal picture?

### **Support In Difficulty**

Solomon wrote about the blessing of having a companion.

We read:

*"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. And, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone? Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken."* (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

Though his wife and friends were with him, Job must have felt alone. They did not pick him up; they did not comfort him; they did not stand with him. As disappointing as it may have been to not have the support of his friends, his wife's failure to comfort and help him must have been more so. These trials demonstrated that his friends were not true friends; but worse, it revealed that his wife was not a true friend either.

"Curse God and die!" These are cutting words. Not only in this did she withdraw her endorsement of him, but she trampled underfoot the faith which he determined to keep, despite the current trial. Those who ought to have been on Job's side (his wife and friends) became a tool of Satan to further torment him. Give up your faith! You're guilty! God is not faithful! You must be an evil man!

Christians, who are one body in Christ, are commanded to bear one another's burden (Galatians 6:1-2). How much more important for husband and wife, who are "one flesh" to be a source of encouragement and strength in times of trial?

---

## THOSE WHO GLADLY RECEIVED HIS WORD : A STUDY OF THE CONVERSION OF 3,000 SOULS

Sean P. Cavennder | Bradley, Arkansas, USA

Luke records the Acts of the Apostles in the first century, the conversion of souls unto the Jesus Christ, and the beginnings of the church during the first century. We find many helpful and interesting accounts throughout the book of Acts. It is in this book that we learn God's plan of salvation, His intended activities of the local church, and the power of the gospel.

Perhaps no other chapter in all of the Bible has had the amount of influence upon churches today than that of Acts chapter two. In Acts 2, we have recorded for us the first gospel sermon and the first recorded conversion. Many elements of the Old Testament were fulfilled in Acts 2. In this great chapter we find that the church was established, functional, and in existence as the kingdom of Christ.

Many people point to the conversion of 3,000 souls (Acts

2:41) and wonder at how so many were baptized into the body of Christ. Why do we not see these sorts of numbers coming to Christ today? How can we have that sort of success in leading others to obedience to the gospel? We need to consider the elements involved in their conversion and then we can begin to truly understand why they “gladly received his word” and were baptized.

### **They Witnessed the Operation of the Holy Spirit**

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He promised that His apostles would receive power after the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 1:8). At the close of chapter one the apostles had appointed Matthias to serve as an apostle in Judas’ place, so “he was number with the eleven apostles” (Acts 1:26). As the apostles were all gathered in one place (Acts 2:1), they were all filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).

This was truly a miraculous and awesome event; nothing like this had ever happened before! Notice several things in the text. The text states: “the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4). Any pronoun must have an antecedent which it refers to. Who is Luke referring back to when he states that the Spirit gave “them” utterance? The text clearly indicates the apostles! Jesus promised His apostles that they would receive power and the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Peter and the apostles appointed Matthias as an apostle with the other eleven (Acts 1:15-26). And it came about when they were in the upper room, in one place and with one accord, that the Spirit came upon them (Acts 2:1-3).

The Holy Spirit fell upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. He gave them words to speak (Acts 2:4). The apostles spoke in other tongues, or languages (Acts 2:6, 8-11). The miracle was in the activity of the apostles, not upon the hearers. Yet so many today are waiting for the direct operation of the Holy Spirit to come upon them. Many believe that the Spirit must regenerate a person to have faith (against their own choice), which cannot be resisted. Or many are waiting for the Holy Spirit to come upon them for complete sanctification so that they might work miracles, i.e., speaking in tongues, to ultimately show that they are saved. Sadly, many people will be disappointed.

The promise of the Holy Spirit was given unto the apostles and it was fulfilled in the apostles as they began speaking in other tongues, preaching in the name of Jesus Christ. The operation of the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles as they were given words to speak. The Holy Spirit was not promised to the listeners.

However, this is not to argue that the audience received no benefit from the operation of the Holy Spirit. They were not directly acted upon by the Holy Spirit against their will, but

they did witness the activity of the Holy Spirit. Through the apostles' teaching, they were able to hear words by which they would be saved (cf. Acts 11:14, 15).

### **They Were Influenced By the Fulfillment of Prophecy**

Those who were in attendance at Pentecost in Acts chapter two, were not only witnessing the operation of the Holy Spirit, giving them words by which they might be saved, but they were also able to be influenced by the fulfillment of prophecy.

Peter and the eleven apostles began to preach that all of the events occurring that day were in direct fulfillment of the prophet Joel (Acts 2:16). When the crowd was confused about why all of this was happening, Peter is recorded as arguing that everything they were seeing and hearing was "spoken by the prophet Joel." The text of the first gospel sermon was based upon the events that were occurring, all pointing to the great day of salvation through the Lord (Acts 2:21).

While we may be unable to witness all of the Old Testament prophecies about Christ being fulfilled, we can still certainly be influenced by reading them today. Fulfillment of prophecy is one of the strongest methods of proving the validity of the Bible. When you consider that many prophets, who all preached at different times over a vast number of years and to different generations, and there is not a single contradiction between them, is beyond impressive. The only reasonable answer is that God is at work and that God is the author behind all of the prophecies and words that were proclaimed.

People would be spoken of specifically before they were even conceived or born. Nations were prophesied to become world empires years before those empires every came into existence. Events were spoken of in great detail before they would every happen.

The prophecies about Christ are quite amazing too. The seed of woman was promised (Genesis 3:15). Abraham was promised to have a seed that would bless all nations (Genesis 12:1-3). One of Abraham's great grandsons, Judah, the son of Jacob, was chosen as part of the Messianic plan (Genesis 49:10). Hundreds of years later, David was promised to be given an heir that would establish a throne and a kingdom for eternity (2 Samuel 7:16). Then the details of Isaiah's prophecies about Christ are impressive. He spoke of how Christ would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), He would establish the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6, 7), and He would die and be raised from the dead (Isaiah 53). Micah prophesied of the location of the Savior's birth (Micah 5:2). Joel proclaimed that salvation would be through the Messiah

(Joel 2:32).

All of these prophecies point to a great theme which is that God has revealed His word unto us. We may not witness these events unfolding before our very eyes. However, we have the word of God recorded for us, preserved, translated, and within our fingertips. We can read, study, and learn from the totality of the prophets. While the people at Pentecost were limited to seeing only part of prophecy being fulfilled, we are able to see that all of prophecy has been fulfilled (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:9-10). We are blessed to have the entirety of God's word so that we may understand the entire scheme of redemption.

### **They Heard Jesus Preached**

A majority of the sermon that was preached on the day of Pentecost was about Jesus of Nazareth. When Jesus is proclaimed it will naturally result in the conversion of sincere, good-hearted people. We should never be ashamed to preach Jesus and Him crucified.

Peter makes several observations about Jesus of Nazareth. First, He was a man approved of God (Acts 2:22). The proof that was offered to show the truthfulness of that affirmation was that Jesus performed miracles, wonders, and signs. The audience was well acquainted with Jesus and the miracles that He performed. If Peter had been inaccurate or misleading, then it would seem like this would be an ideal time to correct him.

Secondly, Jesus was crucified, being wrongfully put to death (Acts 2:23). As public and humiliating as His death was, Jesus was not held by the grave. He was raised from the dead by God and was proven to be victorious (Acts 2:24). Even King David prophesied of the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:25-29).

Thirdly, Peter affirmed that Jesus was the son of David (Acts 2:30). God had promised David that He would establish the throne of David forever. It was through Jesus of Nazareth that God fulfilled that promise to David. Jesus was the "fruit of his loins, according to the flesh....to sit on his throne."

Fourthly, Jesus was a king sitting on the throne of David (Acts 2:33-36). This implies that the kingdom had been established and that there must be subjects to the king. The fact that Christ was exalted to the throne also proves that Christ was the Son of God, vindicated to defeat His enemies (Acts 2:34, 35). Jesus was reigning over a kingdom that would never be shaken, nor destroyed.

Preaching Jesus is quite effective. Yet it involves so much more than a mere acknowledgment that Jesus lived and was

a good man. Preaching Jesus involves preaching about the perfect life that He led, the miracles He performed, the unjust death He suffered, the glorious resurrection, the fulfillment of prophecy, and the kingdom of Christ. These are some of the basic elements of preaching Jesus that we must be committed to when we begin to preach His gospel. When people hear preaching that is bold, confident, and Christ-centered, it is no wonder people will turn to the Lord in faith.

### **They Were Commanded To Obey For Remission of Sins**

At the climax of Peter's sermon, when he concluded that Jesus was both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36), the audience was pricked in their heart (Acts 2:37). Being convicted of the unjust death and crucifixion of the Lord and Christ, and their rejection of Him, they were now being faced with the prospect of being rejected by God.

Thus, they appeal to Peter and the apostles by asking the question, "what shall we do?" They were guilty of transgression. They had put to death the Son of God – their King, Priest, and Savior. The hopeless feelings they must have faced. The guilt that was upon them for their sins.

When sincere, good-hearted people recognize that they have sinned then they will seek to be reconciled to God. Yet, many preachers do a great disservice to those sincere people. When preaching lacks a call to obedience, then it will not lead to the salvation of people's souls. Every good sermon must make a call to obey God!

Peter commanded the people at Pentecost to repent (Acts 2:38). Repentance is defined by Kittel as "it then means 'to change one's *noús*,' i.e., opinion, feelings, or purpose." (1) The command was to turn from their guilt of bloodshed and rejection of the Son of God. The mind and attitude that had led these people to kill Jesus, now must learn to believe in Him and accept Him as their Savior. Repentance is often difficult because it requires humility. It also requires admitting that we have been wrong. It is often met with a sense of shame, regret, and sorrow. Yet, repentance must also lead us to change our minds and opinions which leads to a change in life. We cannot just feel sorry for our actions. We must change how we have been living.

Then Peter commanded his audience to be baptized for the remission of sins. Baptism is an immersion in water (Acts 2:38; 8:37-39) that then ushers in the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Colossians 2:12). To deny the necessity of water baptism is to deny access unto the grace of God and forgiveness of our sins.

When our preaching acknowledges sin, but also demands

repentance and baptism to obtain the forgiveness of sins, then it is effective preaching. Due to the command of obedience, sincere folks were able to obtain the remission of their sins.

### Conclusion

The conversion of the 3,000 can happen today. When we allow the word of God as the Holy Spirit has revealed it, the fulfillment of prophecy, preaching Jesus and Him crucified, and commanding obedience, then we can expect that people will be converted to Christ. At the conclusion of Peter's sermon, "they that gladly received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:41). We must remain faithful to the preaching of God's word and when we do then we may lead others to Christ!

(1) Kittel, Gerhard, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley. **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament** 1985 : 639. Print.

---

## NOT TOO FAR FROM JUDAS

Tanner Campbell | Piggott, Arkansas, USA

One of the most astounding accounts to read in the bible is the betrayal of the Christ. Not just the betrayal, but the events which lead up to it never fail to boggle my mind. However, the text is not just an historical account, but a far more personal event for everyone who is a disciple of Jesus. On many occasions, I'd say, we may not be too far from Judas.

Consider the text with me for a moment, and then draw due application. Beginning in Matthew 26:14, we see Judas, just a few days before Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper, making a deal with the chief priests. They agreed to give him thirty pieces of silver in exchange for delivering Jesus into their hands. The text tells us "from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him." The passage picks up at a new day, and a significant evening, when Jesus is gathered together with the twelve apostles. As they were eating, Jesus makes a proclamation that disturbed the minds of the twelve. He said "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." At this word, they were all, as the Greek records "sphodra lupeo," that is, violently distressed. Then "each of them began to say to Him, 'Lord, is it I?'" But Jesus does not give them an answer individually; instead He responds:

*"He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."*

At this point, Judas asks what everyone else seemed to jump

to ask, and said “Rabbi, is it I?” Your guess is as good as mine as to why Judas asked what he already knew. Judas had already made the deal with the chief priests, and has since then “sought opportunity to betray Him” (v. 16). It may be that Judas saw no other option for himself but to ask because he was the only one who had bread dipped from the bowl of sauce located near Jesus (John 13:26). Maybe he thought the Lord didn’t know who it would be exactly. Maybe he thought he could keep his secret by asking, as if he didn’t even know that he was the betrayer. I don’t know the exact reason, but I do know how Jesus responds, and it is heart stopping: “You have said it.” It is plain, direct, confident, and powerful. According to John’s account, this is when Judas makes as quick of an exit as he can make (John 13:30). The next time we see Judas, he is following through with his plan.

I’ve always had difficulty understanding why Judas did what he did. And as I read the account recently with my family, I had to stop and ask the same thing I always ask: “how could he do such a thing, even after he was directly called out by Jesus only a few hours beforehand? Further, how could he go through with it after Jesus specifically laid out the sentence for the crime, saying ‘it would have been good for that man if he had not been born?’” Then my wife chimed in and opened the eyes of my unsettled mind, saying, “many people do this today, knowing the consequence of the sin and still commit it.” She hit the nail on the head and prompted this entire article. We’re not too far from Judas. We betray Jesus every time we choose to forsake Him to commit sin. What damage this does to one’s relationship with the Lord! Have we not read that the relationship between Christ and His church is illustrated in the marriage relationship (Ephesians 5:22-32)? We all should know the seriousness of betrayal within the marriage covenant. But do we see the seriousness of betraying our relationship with Christ when we commit spiritual adultery against Him every time we choose to sin (1 John 3:6)? Some are of the mentality that most sins don’t hurt anybody. Foolishness! Every sin betrays Jesus. Every sin causes destruction that can last for eternity if true repentance is not found.

Judas betrayed Jesus even after he had heard the consequences of such actions. Once again, we are not too far from Judas. Have we never heard the consequences for any and every sin? John 5:28-29 “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” The Bible is clear that we will be raised to condemnation if we do not do what is good. The actions of Judas are really not that surprising to me anymore, because it is an everyday occurrence here on this earth. Every Christian who commits sin knows full

well the everlasting consequences of that sin before he decides to do it, just as Judas did.

When Judas was about to deliver Jesus into the hands of the chief priests, he gave them a signal, saying, “Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him” (Matthew 26:48). Today, these words remind me of the Sunday service for the betrayer of Jesus, who come each Sunday to kiss the one they are betraying. They come and pay homage and praise to the Savior, only to betray Him to sin throughout the week. Hypocrites, do you really think you will be able to stand before Jesus in Judgment after living that kind of life? You will stand, for you will be made to stand in shame, and you will wail. Friend, be not like Judas, do not hang yourself in your sins. Repent. Devote your life to serve the Lord. Do not betray Him.

How far are you from Judas?

---

## CHRISTIAN WOMEN

Mike Thomas | Beaver Dam, Kentucky, USA

I have a profound respect for Christian women who remain faithful to the Lord, even when they must do so on their own. These are the real heroes of life. If they have children at home, they bring them faithfully to every service. They are exhausted and tired, but they press on anyway because of their love for God and His will. These women have value and beauty that are beyond this world.

Most of us, myself included, would not be in the Lord without the work and influence of godly women. From my mother, to the women who helped convert her, to the women who encouraged us in the Lord, to the woman I married, to the women in her family, to the women we’ve worshiped with, to the women who have encouraged me in my preaching, to my daughter. On and on, I could testify to my indebtedness to godly women. You can do the same in your own life.

Many local churches would not have the growth or success they have were it not for the influence of godly women. The church at Philippi began with the conversion of Lydia (Acts 16:13-15), whose example promoted the gospel in that community (v. 40). The same is true of Timothy’s mother and grandmother. Their unfeigned faith had a saving influence on the man who would become Paul’s loyal assistant (Philippians 2:20-21; 2 Timothy 1:5). These women did not stand in a pulpit to preach or serve as bishops of congregations, since these works are contrary to God’s will (1 Timothy 2:11-12; 3:1), but they still promoted the spread of the gospel in how they lived, and in what they said (Proverbs 31:26). Women like this are invaluable to

the work of the church (Romans 16:1-2). May we as Christians always be mindful and appreciative of their contribution.

---

## A DISCUSSION OF THE BENEVOLENT WORK OF THE CHURCH

### **Message from Preacher in Tennessee**

A faithful brother and friend in Christ in Africa sent me a copy of certain of your handouts from when you were there in February of this year. He is very concerned about the damage you have begun and has expressed that concern. One of these handouts was entitled, "The Church's Work of Ministering to the Needy," and contained, "The Pattern Revealed," which listed a number of New Testament scriptures. The problem is it is incomplete. Why did you not include Galatians 6:10, which states, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." You will note that Paul wrote to the brethren that "we" (plural pronoun) are to do good to all, as opportunity allows. This would authorize the church to do good to all, in addition to the individual Christian doing good as he could. You left out another key passage and that is James 1:27 which says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." The church of Christ is to practice pure religion. To argue that the individual only may support the fatherless and widows in this passage is to take the position that only the individual Christian may practice pure and undefiled religion. Right? Your handout stated, "The local church is limited in its work of ministering to the needy to the relief of needy saints." This is false doctrine in that it violates the two passages above (and others). Your "pattern" binds where God's Word has not bound. This is the commonly known among faithful and sound brethren as the "saints only doctrine," which has been taught for many years by false teachers. You even went on to add, "But it is also an exclusive pattern we must neither change nor violate - 2 John 9." I

wholeheartedly agree with 2 John 9-11 which teaches we are to abide in the doctrine of Christ and refuse to bid Godspeed to false teachers and false doctrine. However, you have violated the very passage of 2 John 9 by binding which God's Word has not bound. Liberals are left wing extremists and you are part of a movement which constitutes right wing extremists. You also refused to preach the whole counsel of God by omitting 2 Corinthians 9:13, which is an example of the first century church at Corinth giving to both needy saints and to all men. Withhold truth from those who have not studied these matters will and has led some astray. Taking the scriptural position that the Lord's church, as opportunity presents itself, may take money from the church treasury and help first, the needy saints, and

then if possible a non-Christian down the street (for example, whose house has just burned down and is need of clothing), does not necessitate that one is to be categorized with apostate churches who have loosed where God's Word has not loosed (are rank liberal in doctrine and practice). I am just as against the abuse of the church treasury in the support of unauthorized things such as entertainment and secular education. You have not fairly represented faithful brethren who have disagreed with your man-made pattern. Your paintbrush is too broad by painting all those who disagree with your false doctrine (who would think you are binding in this area of benevolence), as being connected with those who believe the church should be a "glorified YMCA" (this expression was also used in a second document you handed out). I would also be against such things as church financed gymnasiums and turning the church into a glorified YMCA. Out of sincere concern for the brethren and the truth of the gospel, I would urge you to consider these passages and retract the false statements you have distributed to our brethren in Africa.

### **Answer**

Thank you for expressing your sincere concern and disagreement with material I have distributed to preachers in Africa. I view you as a friend rather than an enemy for attempting to correct what you perceive as my error. I hope you and I can discuss our disagreements calmly, reasonably, and lovingly. I do not question your honesty, and I hope you will show me the same charity. I will seek to fairly consider your argumentation from Scripture, and I hope you will treat me the same way.

I do not paint all of those who practice church benevolent help to non-saints with the same broad brush. There are various positions taken and different arguments made by brethren who differ with me on this issue, and I try to fairly consider each one.

However, in all candor, the "mainline" Churches of Christ now engage in every social gospel practice that was once identified with the YMCA or the Salvation Army, and a perusal of any issue of Christian Chronicle will substantiate this charge. As I told a missionary in American Samoa, "You do the same things the liberal, social gospel denominations do; you just justify it in a different way." And the primary proof passage they use is Galatians 6:10.

If Galatians 6:10 justifies "the church to do good to all," what "good" does it not include? If it justifies church support of an orphanage, why not a hospital? And why should the church not build a gymnasium, so young people may have clean, wholesome recreation? Is that not "good"? Brother, your use of Galatians 6:10 opens Pandora's box. You can oppose the

social gospel applications, but you can't do so and remain consistent.

Before I look at the scriptures you employ as proof texts, think with me about what you need to find in these passages. We are discussing the benevolent work of the local church. What indigent people should the local church help? Most institutional brethren do this work by setting up an organization separate from the local church to which congregations send donations. So, to settle our differences, you need to find the local church doing the work of benevolence toward alien sinners by donating to an organization distinct from the congregation.

### **Galatians 6:10**

The context (Galatians 6:1-10) seems to be uniformly spiritual, individual Christians are addressed rather than the local church, and it certainly does not prove an organization of human design can be attached to the church. Does the use of the plural "brethren" (verse 1), "us" (verses 9-10), and "we" (Ibid) prove Galatians 6:10 pertains to the church? If I take a plurality of brethren as witnesses to speak to a brother who has sinned against me, the church is not functioning (Matthew 18:15-17). If a plurality of brethren go fishing, the church hasn't gone fishing.

If Galatians 6:10 authorizes church support of orphanages, it authorizes much more. It instructs us to do good to "all men." Surely, if doing good to all men justifies church supported institutions for homeless children, it also sanctifies church of Christ hospitals for the sick, shelters for the homeless, and soup kitchens for the hungry.

If "do good to all" in this passage authorizes congregational benevolence to unbelievers and church support of human institutions, it is teaching the Social Gospel. Thus, it is no surprise that Rubel Shelly, a prominent leader of the "New Hermeneutic" forces among extremely liberal Churches of Christ, opening advocates the social gospel.

*The call to follow Jesus' example of self-emptying service is the justification for every kind of help program that churches wish to pursue. Counseling, day care, literacy, food and housing, drug and alcohol treatment programs - all are ways of caring for and nurturing people* (**Second Incarnation**.166).

What scriptural proof does Shelly offer? Galatians 6:10! (Ibid) And why not? He is taking to its logical consequences over half a century of institutional argument.

### **James 1:27**

The entire context of this passage (James 1:19-27) is uniformly individual. Just because this is the only use of the phrase "pure and undefiled religion" in the Bible doesn't mean other passages do not

address the subject. This misinterpretation of the passage elevates the work of relieving the physically needy above the work of preaching the gospel. The Lord commanded, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). He didn't command the church to "Go into all the world and relieve all the poor." The church is "the pillar and ground of the truth"(1 Timothy 3:14-15) not the soup kitchen for all the poor.

### **2 Corinthians 9:13**

The word "men" in 2 Corinthians 9:13 is in italics, meaning it was added by the translators, and there is no Greek word behind it. It literally states, "Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all." "All" of what must be determined by the context. The context is chapters eight and nine, which discusses the contribution Paul took from Gentile congregations for the needy saints in Jerusalem. This contribution was "the fellowship of the ministering to the saints" (2 Corinthians 8:4; cf. 9:1). The immediate context, verse 12, reveals who the "all" is, "saints." The Jerusalem brethren rejoiced at the liberal giving of the Gentile congregations to them, the saints in Jerusalem, and to all the saints.

The context also makes it clear that a contribution by a congregation is an expression of fellowship in Christ (2 Corinthians 8:4). Individually, I should give to meet the needs of my enemies (Matthew 5:43-48). But when the church makes a contribution it is an expression of fellowship in Christ, whether it is relief of the needy (2 Corinthians 8:4) or support of a preacher (Philippians 4:15-16; The Greek word here translated "communicated" is "ekoinoneisen," "had fellowship" - George Ricker Berry, **The Interlinear Translation of the Greek New Testament**). Individually, if my neighbor was a Muslim imam who hated me, if he could not feed his family, I would assist him. Can the church contribute to the needs of that imam?

### **Conclusion**

Dear brother, your "proof passages" do not support your position. They do not authorize the church to do anything, and they certainly do not authorize church support of organizations begun by men. You are inconsistent in the application of your own arguments. If you consistently followed your own reasoning, you would join Rubel Shelly and the "New Hermeneutic" folks in complete acceptance of all Social Gospel practices, just as the vast majority of brethren have done. Why not do as I am doing? Oppose all this apostasy, which is leading to a new "Churches of Christ" denomination, just as the parallel apostasy in the nineteenth century produced the Christian Church denomination.

### **His Reply**

Thanks for your email letter dated Thursday, March 27, 2014 in response to my email to you dated Tuesday, Mar 25, 2014 requesting you repent of teaching error to brethren in Africa. Although I do not agree with you, I do appreciate the fact you have not tried to dodge discussion on these matters and have engaged in the same.

I write in respect for the authority of God's Word and a commitment to teach only that which is revealed. Also, I write in recognition of the New

Testament as the law we are to be judged by and that the Bible authorizes in three ways: 1) Direct Command, 2) Example, & 3) Implication. (Jn. 12:48; Gal. 6:2; Acts 2:42; 2 In. 9-11; 2 Tim. 2: 15).

The view that says the church is authorized to do just anything (whatever) the individual is authorized to do is false. Faithful brethren do not hold that position as you mischaracterized.

The church is only authorized to perform the work of edification, benevolence and evangelism (Col. 3:17). The mission of the church is to preach the gospel to every creature (Mk. 16:15-16; Mt. 28:19-20). For example, the individual Christian may eat fish at home for his meal, but he may not eat fish in the worship of God in substitute of the unleavened bread during the Lord's Supper.

However, what I am against is the abuse of this principle, of seeing a pattern where there is no pattern and thereby binding on God's people where God has not bound. Paul wrote that we should not put up with those who do that not even for an hour (Gal. 2:4-5). Yes, Judaizers were guilty of binding the law of Moses on male Gentile converts and you are not being accused of that particular binding. However, you have the same type of spirit as the Judaizers by binding where God has not bound in other areas.

#### **Understanding 2 Corinthians 9: 13**

Yes, I recognize the word *men* is in italics, which indicates it was added by the translators who sought to aid us in our understanding of the sense of the text and is not in the original text. This poses no problem since I do not make my position dependent upon that italicized word. You stated that the word "them" refers to saints and this is a fact upon which we agree. However, your argumentation and conclusion concerning the identity of "unto all" is flawed. A study of your argumentation reveals you only asserted (presupposed) this refers to other saints. Paul said, "Prove all things" (1 Thess. 5:21). Simply stating your opinion and then throwing up Biblical references does not demonstrate anything except your ability to produce only the appearance of giving proof.

#### **2 Corinthians 9:13 -- The Holy Spirit's Word For "ALL" (Greek: *Pantas*)**

The expression "unto all" in 2 Cor. 9: 13 is from the Greek *eis pantas*. The same word is used in Gal. 6:10 where Paul said, "As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all (*pantas*) men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Let's let the Bible interpret the Bible. *Pantas* has the meaning of all men (saints & sinners) in Gal. 6:10 (and you even agree to that) and *pantas* has the same meaning in 2 Cor. 9:13. The churches of Galatia were to do good, especially to the saints, but also to the sinners (Gal. 1:2; Gal. 6:10). Even those of your persuasion are forced to admit that "all" in Gal. 6: 10 refers to everyone. There's no reason to suggest it means anything else in 2 Cor. 9: 13. Paul taught the same fundamentals in every church: " ... as I teach every where in every church" (1 Cor. 4: 17).

Faithful brethren are against the abuse of the principle of giving and follow qualifying Biblical principles in giving first to saints, then to others, as opportunity presents itself. For example, we are against

church financed gymnasiums designed to entertain the young people and such like things (see my article which shows there is no Biblical authority for church financed Gymnasiums and suchlike abuses in *Contending For The Faith* , Oct. 1993, editor Ira Y. Rice).

Just as elders must use discretion in giving to saints, so the elders must use good judgment in giving to a benevolent need of a non-saint. There may be abuses in giving to saints as well as giving to non-saints, yet I do not hear those of your category crying out not to practice benevolence to the needy members of the church because of the potential for abuse of the practice. So, the abuse of a thing does not necessitate the thing itself is unscriptural.

### **Smoke Screens**

Smokescreens only obscure attention from the real issues.

**Smoke Screen #1:** You mentioned Rubel Shelly, I am anti-Rubel Shelly (in a scriptural way). I have been personally criticized by Rubel for criticizing his liberalism (in email correspondence). Just because Rubel abuses the principle found in Galatians 6:10 does not mean you have the right to group others with him anymore than I would group you with Baptist Billy Graham (faith only false teacher) because he uses some of the same passages you use to show that faith is necessary to salvation. He abuses John 3: 16 to teach his doctrine of faith only. Have you ever quoted John 3:16 in a sermon? If you have would I have the right to accuse you of being in Billy Graham's camp? If I followed your "reasoning," I would say, yes, you belong in Billy's camp.

**Smoke Screen #2:** Your one size fits all categorizing doesn't work. In a tract exposing the CCDRE of Nashville, TN, I showed that the Lord's church has no authority to set up unscriptural parachurch organizations and also using the term, "Churches of Christ." Jesus never said to go into all the world and feed with physical bread every creature. The correct priority is: He did say to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15-16). That is the mission of the church. With benevolence the church, including the individual Christian, does good as opportunity presents itself There's a distinction with regard to the priority the New Testament sets. Faithful brethren do not teach that the church is to be the "soup kitchen for all the poor." Yet, they do not do as you and your brethren and bind where God does not bind, throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

**Smoke Screen #3:** You said,  
"Individually, I should give to meet the needs of my enemies (Matthew 5:43-48). But when the church makes a contribution it is an expression of fellowship in Christ ..."

Ha! And just what makes it not an expression of fellowship when you do it as an individual? (1 John 1:7; 2 John 9-11). Truly, the legs of the lame are not equal. I agree that it is not an expression of extending fellowship when you give as an individual to meet the needs of your enemies (non-Christians), but you are not consistent. This is where hair-splitting and riding hobby horse issues get you. I agree with brother Foy E. Wallace who stated that those who ride a hobby horse usually ride it right out of the church.

The reason it is a good thing (and does not place you in fellowship) with the non-Christian when you as an individual Christian give to a non-Christian enemy, is that we are in the world but not of the world. You as a Christian do not partake of the sins of the non-Christian, but remain pure. In other words you do not go along with the non-Christian in his (unknown to you) bar-hopping, drunkenness and other sins. *"I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world"* (1 Cor. 5:9-10). Note Paul's statement, "for then must ye needs go out of the world." Jesus said of his disciples, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:16).

Both the church collectively and the individual Christian must live in the world, while keeping ourselves pure from the sins of the world (by abstaining from participation in their sinful behavior). The same principle holds true when the elders choose to help out the non-Christian family down the street whose house was demolished by a tornado. (The latter statement you deny and without proper scriptural proof. Your pattern does not take into account this Biblical principle in the strict context I've discussed).

#### **Koinonia Translated "distribution" in KJV**

You stated, "But when the church makes a contribution it is an expression of fellowship in Christ ..."

When the church at Corinth did good to all men in 2 Corinthians 9:13, did this imply that they went into a forced fellowship with them, that is, became partakers with the sins of the sinners helped? No. We agree that the church at Corinth revealed in a practical way the fellowship they enjoyed with the Christians at Jerusalem. However, I agree with the reliable *King James Version* translators which translated the word *koinonia* here as "distribution." This was a "liberal" distribution to the saints and to all. The fact that saints and sinners alike benefit from the existence of Christianity is obvious to all who read the Bible. "Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men" (2 Corinthians 9: 13).

#### **Galatians 6:10 - Help Especially Saints, But Not Saints Only**

You argued Gal. 6:10 was written to the individual Christian only. It is sinful to reject an inspired salutation. The beginning of the letter tells to whom Paul wrote and he wrote to the churches of Galatia (Gal. 1:2). The church (collectively) from the church treasury may do good to all men (in harmony with scriptural guidelines as in regard to benevolence) and the individual Christian should do good as he has opportunity as well.

The letter was addressed to the "churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1:2).

Paul addressed the members of the churches collectively as well as individually. Galatians 6:10 says, "we" and "us" (plural). Both the use of the church treasury and individual responsibility to do good, especially to the saints, but not only to the saints, is authorized.

Galatians 6:6 teaches the preacher is to be financially supported. Your position implies the preacher must be paid by the individual Christian and not from the church treasury! If not, why not? Do you have the brethren line up at the door with your hand out as you “shake them out of the building” after preaching a sermon?

**Keith Said - Gary Said**

Keith Sharp wrote: “If Galatians 6:10 authorizes church support of orphanages, it authorizes much more.

By “much more” you refer to abuses. Such is pure assertion and presupposition on your part. I note that you did not define what you consider a scriptural orphanage to be. You have an orphan home if you have an orphan in it. As a preacher you can claim that the church is supporting a preacher but not your orphanage but if the elders take the number of souls in your household into account when determining your salary, then give you that higher amount due to the number of children in your house, the church is supporting an orphanage and yes, from the church treasury. Deny it if you wish, but there it is for all to see.

Keith wrote: “If Galatians 6:10 justifies ‘the church to do good to all,’ what ‘good’ does it not include? .. “

The answer to your question is not a mystery. Doing good to saints, but not saints only, is doing good only in the areas authorized for the church by the New Testament of Christ. Now what was so hard about that, Keith? Your smokescreen issue of picturing all who disagree with your saints-only doctrine as having an open-ended view of the definition of “good” won’t hold water.

The church is authorized to do good in three areas, evangelism, benevolence and edification. 1) Evangelism: The church does good to the world by preaching the gospel to it (Mark 16:15). 2) Benevolence: The church does good to the world as she has opportunity in the area of benevolence (as per Gal. 6:10), qualified by respecting the principle that evangelism is the mission of the church, not feeding the poor and clothing the naked. Jesus said that the poor you will always have with you, but he did not teach we have no obligation to any of the poor. Providing for the poor of the world would not be the mission of the church; that would be preaching to every lost soul the gospel. 3) Edification: The church does good to the world indirectly when she keeps the saved, saved by the building up of herself by the word of God, Acts 20:32. By being built up in the faith, the church can be a light to the world and salt to the earth (Mt. 5:13-16; Phil. 2:15-16).

Keith wrote: “Brother, your use of Galatians 6:10 opens Pandora’s box. You can oppose the social gospel applications, but you can’t do so and remain consistent”

This is but another assertion on your part, which has been answered above. Being consistent is possible when one allows the definition of “good” and the expression, “as we have therefore opportunity,” of Galatians 6:10 to be guided by the divine principles found in the New Testament, qualifying these concepts.

### **Let's Study James 1:27**

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this,  
To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself  
unspotted from the world.

While certainly both the church and the individual Christian is to  
practice "pure religion and undefiled"-

**Some Teach That**

**ONLY THE INDIVIDUAL**

**Is To Practice Pure & Undefiled Religion**

**Keith Sharp Teaches That ONLY THE INDIVIDUAL**

**Is To Practice Pure & Undefiled Religion**

**Keith Sharp Teaches That "The Church of Christ"**

**Is Not Authorized To Practice Pure And Undefiled Religion**

**But That ONLY THE INDIVIDUAL Is Authorized To Practice Pure &  
Undefiled Religion**

**Who Shall We Believe? Keith Sharp or James, the inspired writer?**

Keith, you stated, *"The entire context of this passage (James 1: 19-27)  
is uniformly individual."*

Your description of the "entire context of this passage" being individual omits what is clearly before us when we read James chapter one which includes plural pronouns. (By the way, no one denies the importance of "other passages"). You need to read the text, all of it! You are willing to bring in other passages which you say teach the work of James 1:27 is for the individual only in order to shed light on and qualify James 1:27, but are not willing to bring in James 1:1-2 ("My brethren" plural) from the salutation of the epistle of James. How consistent is that? Also, see: "My beloved brethren" (plural) James 1:19. You are practicing special pleading by ignoring verses which contradict and damage your position.

James 1:2 addresses "My brethren." Is brethren singular or plural? This must be kept in mind while reading the entire epistle. This is a fact which you have totally ignored. This expression precedes the command to practice pure and undefiled religion in James 1:27. Are you are addicted to your hobby horse issue and have simply put blinders on thereby missing to whom the epistle is written?

Who has the ability to keep unspotted from the world--the church, the individual himself or both? Answer: Both! Ephesians 5:25-27 commands the church to be without spot or wrinkle and that it should be holy and without blemish. While individual responsibility is not denied, we must not overlook passages like Ephesians 5:25-27 as well. Your doctrine then is that the church collectively cannot practice pure and undefiled religion (in reference to your view of James 1:27). Please think about it, Keith.

The scriptural position is that both the church (through the church treasury, James 1:1-2) and the individual Christian are authorized (commanded) to practice pure and undefiled religion (as opportunity

and ability permit (Gal. 6: 10; 2 Cor. 9: 13).

When the church sends funds to a scripturally organized home with orphans in it, the substitute parents perform the practical daily functions for the child, providing education, discipline, entertainment, and other things in harmony with divine principles of righteousness. It is sent to the home because the money is sent to the parents to be distributed by them for the children's benefit. The home is one of the three divinely originated organizations (Home, Gen. 2:24; Government, Rom. 13:1ff; The Church, Mt. 16:18). The elders do not oversee the day to day affairs in homes of children. God gave that job to the parents in the home, whether a substitute parent, as Joseph with his son, Jesus, or natural parents.

According to I Tim. 5:16 "widows indeed" may be supported from the church treasury. If this widow lives alone then the church (in supporting this widow indeed) is supporting a home from the Lord's treasury. This is authorized and is pure and undefiled religion (James 1 :27).

You and I both know that there are those in the church who cannot individually take in an orphan (like a widow in the church) but can fulfill that desire to help orphans by her contribution on Sunday. I agree that there are many arrangements in this world to do "good" but are not scriptural arrangements (Mt. 7:21-23). But I'm against any doctrine which places unscriptural limitations on God's commands.

What about the church sending money to false religious groups and unscriptural organizations? There's no Bible authority for contributing to false religious groups or unauthorized organizations either from the church treasury or from the individual's pocket. (cf. 2 In. 9-11).

Let's take a look at the fruit of this man-made doctrine which would teach it is a sin to help little children out of the Lord's treasury. I offer a couple of excellent quotes to express my point.

"We now have this church opposed to assisting the helpless, starving, naked, sick, child from its church treasury in any way while the self-sufficient, healthy, preacher makes the greatest grab from said treasury. How low in consistency can one go?"

"Jesus while on earth rebuked his disciples for refusing little children the privilege of receiving blessings through his physical body, Matt. 19:14,15, 'Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.' The Lord's spiritual body, the church, is his source of giving blessing on earth today. Who would dare be so hard-hearted as to say that the spiritual body of the Lord will refuse to give blessings to the little child that was so readily received by Him while in his physical body on earth? The same rebuke given to such foolish disciples ought to again cause such-like to hang the head in shame." (*Gospel Defender*, Editorial, Dec. 1959, Vol. I: No.3)

"This writer knows of a congregation that can find scriptural authority for buying a lawnmower but emphatically states there is no scriptural authority for taking money out of the same

treasury and helping orphans. The statement has been made from their pulpit that, 'The church 'as such' is not obligated to children but only to saints.' It seems that the church 'as such' in this case is obligated to mowing the lawn but not to orphans. This sort of reasoning is an excellent example of some of the 'hair splitting' which is persisted in and results in 'church splitting.' Read Lk. 10:25-37; Gal. 6: 10; Jas. 1 :27; I Tim. 5:3-16 and pray to God for understanding with an open heart to accept what God says." (*Gospel Defender* , Dec. 1959. Vol. I: No.3. Albert Hill)

Keith wrote: Dear brother, your 'proof passages' do not support your position."

Keith, I appreciate you telling me what you think I need to hear, but sadly your proof passages do not support your position, in that you have imagined a pattern where the true pattern has been excluded by the hair-splitting views of uninspired men such as **Roy E. Cogdill**. Jesus warned us not to follow those who teach "doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).

We should fight (with love for the truth and love for souls) against those who truly loose where God's word does not loose (left hand extremists) and against those who bind where God's word does not bind (right hand extremists). We must be content to abide in the doctrine of Christ (Phil. 1 :17; Jude 3; 2 John 9-11).

Brother, I would continue to encourage you to cease confusing others on these issues by interjecting hobby horse issues and leading men away from the simplicity that is in Christ (2 Cor. 11:3).

### **Second Answer**

Thank you for your challenging reply to my message. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend"(Proverbs 27:17). Our mutual exchange of ideas based on our study of the Scriptures should sharpen the thinking of us both - but it needs to be kept friendly. For that reason I'll overlook the name calling and charges of misrepresentation in hope that time and calm reflection will lead to a more reasonable consideration of my messages.

Brother, I did not charge that you believed or practiced the same things as such men as Rubel Shelly, but you make the same arguments for your practices that they make for their social gospel activities. You both misuse Galatians 6:10. You can oppose them if you insist, but you are inconsistent.

"Do good" in Galatians 6:10 is completely generic, unless the spiritual context of verses 1-10 limits it to spiritual matters, in which case relief of the needy is not even in consideration. When my children were still at home, my wife and I had parties for them and their friends in our home. We were also active in the Scouts. We were offering them innocent fun so they would not become involved in sinful activities. I think you and I agree we were doing good. But we were acting as parents, and it is wrong for congregations to sponsor such activities. I think we agree on this as well. But your use of Galatians 6:10 would justify any sort of morally pure recreational activities sponsored by

local churches, and this is precisely what “mainline” Churches of Christ do. You can oppose their church gymnasiums if you want, but your use of Galatians 6:10 opens the gym door.

### 2 Corinthians 9:13

“Them” in 2 Corinthians 9:13 refers to a specific group of saints. “But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem”(Romans 15:25-26).

*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1-3).*

“Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all (2 Corinthians 9:13, **New American Standard Bible**). The general context establishes that “they” and “them” refer to the saints in Jerusalem, and “all” in context is all saints.

And this contribution was indeed an expression of fellowship in Christ. The churches of Macedonia were beseeching Paul and his companions “with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints” (2 Corinthians 8:4, **American Standard Version**).

### “All”

Of course the word “all” can be and is used in a universal sense, and this is established by its context. You give examples in which the context is universal, and I accept them all (pun fully intended). But what about Acts 2:44-45 and Acts 4:32-35? Both passages state that the church in Jerusalem distributed to “all.” Either the church in Jerusalem was contributing to every needy person in the world (universal), or the context limits the “all.” In both passages the “all” is limited to saints (“all that believed” - Acts 2:44; “the multitude of them that believed” - Acts 4:32).

Thus, “all” is unlimited in its context but is limited by its context. The context of 2 Corinthians 9:13 is saints (2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:1,12).

It is not abuses of a principle I’m opposing. Your principle is unscriptural.

### Koinonia

Concerning the use of the Greek word “koinonia” in 2 Corinthians 8:4, you state, “We agree that the church at Corinth revealed in a practical way the fellowship they enjoyed with the Christians at Jerusalem.” I have no problem with the **King James Version**. I preached from it for thirty years and have used the **New King James Version** the last nineteen. But we agree the contribution of 2 Corinthians chapters eight and nine was an expression of fellowship. If it includes sinners, the churches were in fellowship with sinners.

### **Salutation of Galatians**

I have no problem with the fact Paul wrote Galatians “unto the churches of Galatia” (Galatians 1:2). Sometimes I preach to the church on the relationship between husbands and wives. I tell the husbands to render to their wives “due benevolence” (1 Corinthians 7:3-4). Does the fact I’m preaching to the church mean the church should render due benevolence to the wives?

Galatians 6:6 does not authorize the church to support preachers, but 1 Corinthians 9:1-14; 2 Corinthians 11:8; and Philippians 4:15-16 do.

### **Unscriptural Parachurch Organizations**

I would be interested to know what “unscriptural parachurch organizations” you oppose. The orphanages operated by brethren have boards of directors, presidents, employees, treasuries, and property. They are funded by churches. What makes them right and other “parachurch organizations” unscriptural? If a congregation spends more money on evangelism than on benevolence, may it set up an urban soup kitchen? Why not?

### **Fellowship in Christ**

On page three you concede that the contribution of 2 Corinthians chapters eight and nine was fellowship, but on page four you get pretty upset about my position that all contributions from the church treasury are expressions of fellowship in Christ. I didn’t just assert it without proof. The benevolent contribution of Romans 15:25-28; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; and 2 Corinthians 8 - 9 was fellowship (2 Corinthians 8:4). Support of a preacher is fellowship (Philippians 4:15-16; “Communicated” in verse 15 is the translation of “koinoneo”). Seriously, brother, if a church helped a Muslim imam from its treasury, wouldn’t you accuse them of having fellowship with him? And you would be right if you did so!

Christians have five relationships: family (Colossians 3:18-21), business (Colossians 3:22- 4:1), social (Colossians 4:5), civil (Romans 13:1-7), and spiritual (Ephesians 1:3). The expression of that spiritual relationship is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23), and the organized expression of it is the local church (1 Corinthians 1:2; Philippians 1:1). The tie in that spiritual relationship is fellowship in Christ (1 John 1:3,7). It’s no wonder that any contribution made by the local church is an expression of fellowship in Christ (2 Corinthians 8:4; Philippians 4:15-16).

### **There Are Homes, and Then There Are Homes.**

You claim if I take in an orphan, I “have an orphan home.” Brother, hopefully you’re just confused. To intentionally use the same word in more than one way in an argument is the fallacy of equivocation. That’s recognized by logicians as a propaganda technique. It’s an evasion of logical reasoning (cf. 2 Timothy 2:7). By “home” do you mean family, dwelling place, or corporate body? Neither my family nor my house is a “parachurch organization,” but a church supported orphanage is.

If Galatians 6:10 applies to the local church and is fulfilled in relief of the needy, then relief of the needy is indeed the mission of the church. Local churches would then be required to contribute to the poor as they

have opportunity and ability. That certainly includes more than orphans and widows. It would include sinners who are trying to find work but can't, the homeless, etc. In other words, even after taking Second Thessalonians 3:10 and Ephesians 5:11 into account, it would mean the social gospel.

**James 1:27**

Now, Brother, if you read my reply to your first message, and I think you did, surely you know I specifically affirmed the church can and must practice pure and undefiled religion. Just because this is the only use of the phrase "pure and undefiled religion" in the Bible doesn't mean other passages do not address the subject. This misinterpretation of the passage elevates the work of relieving the physically needy above the work of preaching the gospel.

Plural verses do not mean the church is involved. If I take one or two witnesses with me to seek reconciliation with a brother who has sinned against me, the church is not involved (Matthew 18:15-17).

James 1:1-2 addresses the universal church. If this authorizes the church to function collectively through its treasury, it authorizes the universal church to function collectively and to have a treasury. I'm sure Pope Francis would appreciate this endorsement of his position, but I think you have defended more than you meant to.

A better example would be Second Thessalonians. Paul addresses the letter "to the church of the Thessalonians." But we both agree that Second Thessalonians 3:10 - "if any would not work, neither should he eat" - does not apply to the church. Likewise, the apostle addresses First Corinthians "unto the church of God which is at Corinth," but that doesn't mean "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence" (1 Corinthians 7:3) applies to the church.

If the board of directors of an orphanage are substitute parents and the orphanage is the home restored, then why not argue that the Anglican Church is the church restored? You don't restore a family by placing a child in an institution. Adoption by a mother and father, the Lord's arrangement for raising children (Ephesians 6:1-4; Titus 2:4), restores a child to a family.

Yes, there are those who are unable to take in orphans. And there are many godly couples who want to adopt but are unable to get a child, either because of onerous government regulations or orphanages which are unwilling to allow the children to be adopted. Responsibility equals ability plus opportunity (Matthew 25:14-30).

Your emotional appeal about refusing to help orphans completely misses the mark. God requires that His people care for the poor and helpless (James 1:26-27). There is an order of responsibility. We must support our aged parents when they cannot support themselves, and a contribution to the church cannot meet this obligation (Exodus 20:12; Matthew 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13; Ephesians 6:2-3). We as individuals have an obligation to care for widows and orphans who are kin to us which we cannot push off onto the church (1 Timothy 5:4,8,16). Whereas the local church is only authorized to give benevolent aid to needy Christians (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 6:1-4; Acts 11:27-30; Romans

15:25-26; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:1-4,13-15; 9:1,12-13; 1 Timothy 5:3,10,16), if a Christian has widows or orphans kin to him and needs help to support them, the church can assist him (1 Timothy 5:8; Acts 4:34-35).

Christ has given the local congregation elders to rule (Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 5:17), deacons to administer (Philippians 1:1), and a treasury to supply funds (1 Corinthians 16:1-4) - everything needed to do all its own benevolent work (Acts 6:1-4). Organizations receiving donations from the church to do the benevolent work the Lord assigned to individual Christians or to the local church are both unneeded and unauthorized (2 John verses 9-11).

### **Where Churches of Christ Are Going**

Brother, please consider seriously the parallel between the Christian Church digression of the latter part of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century and the direction "mainline" Churches of Christ have been and are going a century later.

*David Edwin Harrell, Jr., is an American historian who is best known for his scholarship of Religion in the United States. He is a Professor Emeritus at Auburn University, where he served as the Breedan Eminent Scholar of Southern History (Wikipedia).*

David E. Harrell, Jr. is also a preacher of the gospel. In his scholarly book **The Social Sources of Division in the Disciples of Christ, 1865-1900** he makes the following noteworthy observations.

*A much more noticeable, and more important, symptom of the growing denominational consciousness of church leaders was the growth of institutional benevolence in the late nineteenth century. Organized benevolence grew slowly in Disciples history because of the caustic anti-institutionalism preached by the church early leaders (62).*

*The success of the social gospel movement among Disciples was made possible by moderate churchmen who broadened their concept of the church to include a social mission.... Of course, most moderates in the church insisted that Christianity should be a balance between social and spiritual work (88-9).*

Brother, sixty years ago, when churches of Christ in America were in foment that led to division and alienation, there were just three primary differences between "institutional" and "non-institutional" brethren: church support of the orphanages, the sponsoring church (Herald of Truth), and church "fellowship dinners." Now, as I challenged in my previous reply, consult any issue of Christian Chronicle and you will see abundant evidence that "mainline" Churches of Christ practice every social gospel activity that liberal denominations do. Moderates such as you have opened the door.

unless otherwise noted, answers to questions by Keith Sharp

---

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

[Click here](#) to forward this email to a friend

Highway 5 South Church of Christ  
2950 Highway 5 South  
Mountain Home, AR 72653  
US

[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.

