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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)

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"Virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government"
(George Washington, "Farewell Address")

QUESTION ON DIVORCE/REMARRIAGE

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

Question

Keith, I agree with your application of Rom. 7:2-3 regarding the unscripturally divorced and remarried woman whose previous husband died. This prompts me to note reference to "the law," verse 1, and that verse 2 specifically states that it is "the woman which hath a husband" who commits adultery if she marries another, verse 3.

Under the law, a wife put away for cause no longer had a husband because she was free to marry another (Deut. 24:1-2). Likewise, Mt 19:9 tells that a wife put away for fornication no longer has a husband because otherwise, the man who put her away would not be free to marry another. Upon what basis, then, is it taught that the wife put away for fornication and marries another, commits adultery? She has no husband.

Answer

We must have authority from the Lord Jesus Christ for all we do

(Colossians 3:17). The only person with a living former spouse whom the Lord gives permission to marry another is the innocent party who divorced his/her spouse for sexual immorality (Matthew 19:9). All others with living former spouses who remarry are committing adultery (Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:9; Mark 10:11-12).

QUESTION ON TONGUE SPEAKING FROM ETHIOPIA

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

Question

Greetings from Ethiopia.

Hope you recognize me very well. I have a question regarding speaking in tongues.

The first one is Acts 2:4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues' as the Spirit enabled them.

The second, 1cor. 14:2 For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.

Now what does it mean does that mean two different speaking.

Please make clear me your understanding, the denomination preachers teach there are two different speaking in tongues one for men the other for God.

Answer

Dear Wubishet,

Thank you for your good question about speaking in tongues.

It is clear in Acts 2:4-12 that tongue speaking was the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4) and was speaking in a human language that the speaker had not learned to speak by natural means (Acts 2:6-12, cf. 16-18). Yes, it was for the benefit of people.

The same is true in the context of First Corinthians 14:2. First Corinthians chapters 12-14 is one long context dealing with the use of miraculous spiritual gifts (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:1). The tongues could be "interpreted" (*"diernneuno"* - *"to explain, interpret, translate"* - William Mounce, **Mounce's Complete Expository of Old and New Testament Words**. 1124;

1 Corinthians 14:5). They are languages that have meaning to people (1 Corinthians 14:10). The tongue speaking is done by revelation from the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3-4,7,10-11). They were to benefit the church (verses 5,12-13).

If these known characteristics of tongue speaking fit First Corinthians 14:2, there is no reason to look for another meaning except to try to justify a practice the denominational preachers do not want to give up.

It is important to understand, for those who read from the **King James Version** of the English Bible, that the word "unknown"

(verses 2,4,13-14,19,27) is added by the translators, as they themselves make clear by placing it in italics. The Greek word for “unknown” (*“agnostos”*) is not in the Greek text from which First Corinthians was translated.

Brother, if you spoke in Swahili to the congregation where I am an elder, no one would understand what you said, perhaps including you yourself, except God. You would be speaking to God alone. Unless you have learned to speak Swahili in a natural manner, you would be speaking “in the spirit,” in other words, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 22:43).

The whole point of verse two is not to speak in a language the audience doesn’t understand unless someone translates it into their language (verses 5-28). Thus, the meaning of tongue speaking established in both the remote and immediate contexts fits the passage perfectly. We should look for no other. They are languages that have meaning to people. The tongue speaking is done by revelation from the Holy Spirit. It was to benefit the church..

Furthermore, the meaning imposed on the passage by the denominational preachers eliminates the “tongues’ of the passage as a miraculous spiritual gift and makes it just the human spirit communicating with God. We don’t need a miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit to do that. May we not pray silently?

All miraculous tongue speaking approved by the Lord was speaking in a human language by revelation of the Holy Spirit for the benefit of the hearers. All such tongue speaking has ceased (1 Corinthians 13:8-13).

QUESTION ABOUT MARRIAGE FROM NIGERIA

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

Question

I am having difficulty on the issue of marriage. Some of our members, especially the new converts have not concluded their marriage rights as the custom is in this area. They have initiated the marriage by seeking the consent of their parents in-law to be, pending when they have the money to pay their bride price, and other family disagreements sometimes causes the delay in the payment.

Some brethren are of the opinion that the marriage of such is no marriage, but my understanding of 1 Cor 7:1-2 is to checkmate fornication which I think any brother who has found a sister to marry, and have done the initial visitation to the woman's family and have obtained consent can go on in that marriage. We do not stop there, we are always on their neck to fasten the process so that they could complete the marriage process.

Sometimes, some brethren are suggesting that such brethren

should not take part in worship as in officiation, and that when children comes to them the church should not visit them. As a young congregation, and as those deeply affected are the new converts, what do you advice? Is it wrong to ask questions on marriage and other issues before we baptize a convert? Is there any teaching you have on the matter?

Answer

I will briefly answer in principle. We should submit to the law of the land (Romans 13:1-7) and to the customs of our own people (Romans 12:17; 1 Corinthians 9:19-21), unless they contradict the law of the Lord (Acts 5:29). Follow this principle in dealing with customs for marriage.

Further Answer

Ajayi S. Ojeva | Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria

Marriage is honorable among all (Hebrews 13:4). We must comply with customs on marriage that do not violate the scriptures. We must owe no man anything including dowry (Romans 13:8). It is the sole prerogative of the father of the girl who is getting married to decide whether he would collect dowry or not. He may, for the convenience of the husband to be, decide to reduce items required for bride price (engagement) or even decide not take anything from the man. If the father of the girl has decided to give his daughter out in marriage without collecting anything from the man and hands her daughter over to the man for a wife and blessed them both, the marriage is scriptural.

This is not the same as introduction. Introduction is not marriage but just what it is called, introduction..

On the other hand, some family would give out their daughter to a man in marriage allowing the man to come back in future for the payment of the bride price. In such a case, just as the father has the right to forego bride price, he also has the right to defray payment of bride price. In all these cases, marriage is contracted already.

However, this should not be confused with a trial marriage whereby a father would give his daughter to a man to live with and study themselves. If they are compatible, the man would come and pay the bride price. And if not, he would return the girl to her father. This is fornication, not marriage.

IS WORLD BIBLE SCHOOL SCRIPTURAL?

Ajayi S. Ojeva || Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria

Introduction

There is little or no care today about God's way of doing certain things or works as to just getting it done anyway, any how whether pleasing to God or not. We learn from the Scriptures that the things of God must be done in God's own way (1 Chronicles

15:13). We must not go beyond the Scriptures in anything religious (1 Corinthians 4: 6; 2 John 9). We must respect the authority of the Scriptures (Matthew 28:18; 18:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:15). The church was built according to Divine pattern and we must follow the pattern in anything we do (Exodus 25:40; Hebrews 8:5). We must be ready to do the will of God in everything (Colossians 3:17). Is World Bible School Scriptural? Is it a work according to divine pattern?

Discussion

- I. The Divine Pattern for the Work of the Church
 - A. The mission of the church is evangelism, edification and benevolence (Ephesians 4:12-16; Matthew 28:19-20), and the early churches were united in these upon the teachings of the apostles (Act 2: 42; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 7:17; Philippians 4: 9)
 - B. The New Testament Pattern for evangelism was through the local congregation and individuals. (1Timothy 3:15) (More on this later in the discussion)
 1. Individuals (Acts 5:42; 8:4; 11:19; 2 Timothy 2:2)
 2. Collectively (1Thessalonians 1: 7-8)
 - C. The New Testament pattern for funding the work of the church
 1. Through church collection (1 Corinthians 16 :1-2; 2 Corinthians 9: 6-7)
 2. No centralization of oversight (Acts 14: 23: 20: 28; 1 Peter 5:1-3)
 3. No sponsoring church arrangement, no pooling of funds (Philippians 4:15-19)
 4. No church acted as a messenger of other churches (1 Corinthians 16:3; 2 Corinthians 8: 23)

II. What really is World Bible School and what is wrong with it? According to their own brochure, "World Bible School is a method of teaching the gospel to the lost by using Bible Correspondence Courses. It is not a new method but has recently proven to be very effective in many nations of the world. The teaching is done by Christians who have a special love for lost souls."

But it is more than that. Briefly defined, the World Bible School is a religious organization set up for the purpose of doing the work of the church where and when churches are supposedly weak according to human standard. The founder himself referred to it as "a corporation with directors who are on the WCC (West coast publishing co.) board." Action September 1983 page 2 as quoted in **Stand**, November 1992 by brother Keith Sharp) In a nutshell WBS is a religious organization separate and distinct from the church even though it is hosted by a local church as indicated in their brochure "At the present time World Bible School is directed by R.H. (Tex) Williams working in connection with Ruel Lemons both of whom work under the oversight of the elders of the Westover Hills Church of Christ Austin Texas. The Westover Hills congregation furnishes office space to be used by World Bible School and provides volunteer help to implement the basic

working of the program.”

Even though brethren often claim that WBS is just an arrangement, a method of evangelism, it is evident from its activities that it is more than that. For if WBS should be a method, then, it is a method that has its own methods. And when what is said to be a method is having its own method, it ceases to be a method, and it becomes an organization. Missionary societies are organizations ‘higher’ or above the local organization. They have methods of their own. They would be wrong. Likewise, a ladies Bible class if operated as unit not under the eldership with treasury and with different directives and purposes separate and apart from the eldership but in congregational framework has also become an organization. This time it is smaller than the eldership but ceases to be a method of edification, helping the needy or seeking the lost, and has become an unscriptural organization in like manner to the Missionary Society. (James D. Cox, **With the Bishops and Deacons**. page 67)

III. What makes WBS an unscriptural organization?

The fact that WBS is an organization doing the work of the church makes it unscriptural. The church is the only institution charged with the task of winning the world to Christ. The only medium through which the churches fulfilled their mission of evangelism in the Bible was through the local preachers and individual Christians preaching the gospel everywhere (Acts 5:42; 8:4; 9:26-29; 11:19:13; 14:6-7). There is no example of any church preaching the gospel through a human organization in the Bible. Churches sent preachers who taught both publicly and privately. Individuals Christians also preached both publicly and from House to House.

From Jerusalem, the gospel spread to Antioch and many other cities (Acts 8:4; 11:19). The church at Antioch spread the good news to many other cities by sending out preachers (Acts 13-15). All Asia heard the glad tidings within two years of work from Ephesus (Acts 19:9,10). Paul confirmed that the gospel was preached in the entire world then (Colossians 1:23). All these were done without the aid of any human organization. This is the divine plan of God for His church to carry out its mission as the pillar and bulwark of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15). It is a reflection upon the wisdom of God to set up auxiliary machinery to the church in order for it to do the work assigned it by God, such as WBS is.

The organization of the world Bible school destroys the autonomy of the local congregation. The church universal as portrayed in the scriptures has no organization. It consists of all the saved of the earth, of all ages (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5: 23-25). But the local church is made up of a group of Christians in a locality organized into a corporate body mutually worshiping God and working together under oversight of elders appointed among same

group of people (Act 20: 28; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 11:18; Philippians 1:1). It was this local organization that was responsible for the spreading of the gospel (Acts 13; Romans 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 1:8). Each local congregation does its work under the oversight of its elders. These elders have no authority to oversee works beyond that of their own local congregation where they serve as elders (Acts 20:28; 14:23; Philippians 1:1; 1 Peter 1:3). James D. Cox has this to say on human organization and the autonomy of the local church: "The autonomy of the congregation is important. We have agreed that there is no institution above the local eldership authorized to carry out the mission of the church (i.e., seek the lost, help the needy, and edify the body). There is also no institution authorized to be smaller than the local eldership to perform this mission" (**With the Bishops and Deacons**, page 67).

The World Bible School has a method of operation that ties so many churches together thereby destroying the independence of these local churches by

- (1) Pooling funds together from various churches for WBS programme.
- (2) Planning the work of the local churches for them.
- (3) Overseeing the work of several churches. The World Bible School gets funds for the printing of their materials through money gathered both from churches and individuals. This is evident from their own publication. "We would like to see more churches financially supporting WBS. Small churches that do no mission work because they are small would find themselves responsible for more baptisms than more large churches if they simply sent a monthly check to WBS to help with this good work. Mention it to the leaders and elders where you worship and ask that they consider doing it" (**Action**, March 1986, page 2). Also in their brochure "World Bible School is supported by the contributions of churches and individuals. Contributions are also received from Trust Funds and Foundations operated by Christians."

As we can see from their own brochure, WBS take contributions from churches. Neither the Westover Hills Church of Christ nor WBS has the scriptural right to take contributions from churches – In this way WBS pools funds of several churches together thereby infringing upon their autonomy. WBS may print and sell their materials to churches but may not scripturally take contributions from churches for their programme. And this they have been doing.

The World Bible School oversees the work of several churches. The World Bible School has a follow-up office in Visalia, California. The office handles the oversight of the works the churches are doing with WBS materials. The churches that buy materials will have to send the names of the students they are studying with back to WBS follow-up office. The WBS will look for a preacher or a Christian to follow-up those students. WBS will in turn collect money from the churches to pay the

follow-up workers. Churches send money to the account of the missionary supporting church which will then send to follow-up workers. All these are contrary to the Scriptures.

The command to "GO" is generic. We may use any method that does not contradict the Scriptures such as House to house preaching, public preaching, indoor lectureship, Radio/TV preaching, correspondence courses etc. However, each church must work according to her ability (Revelation 3:8). WBS plans a work beyond the ability of the local church and asks churches to support the programme. This is contrary to the New Testament. No church contributed to another church for any work other than benevolence and even in this the support was sent directly to the church in need. The elders of a congregation have no authority to oversee a work that is beyond their congregation or beyond their capacity (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2-3).

Isn't the World Bible School doing a good work? Brethren often seek to justify the World Bible School on the ground that it is doing a good work and many souls are being converted through it. The good result or otherwise of any action or programme is never the standard of authority. To the human mind Saul was doing a good thing when he offered a sacrifice to prevent Israel from being conquered by the Philistines. But God condemned him because of that and he was rejected from being king over God's people. It was a wrong person doing the right thing (1 Samuel 13:5-14; 1 Chronicles 26:16-21). David was condemned for doing the right thing in the wrong way (1 Chronicles 13:7-11; 15: 11-15; Numbers 7:9).

Conclusion

The church was built according to divine pattern. God has a pattern for accomplishing the mission of the church. To be acceptable to God, we must do His work according to the pattern He laid down in His word. The organization and operation of the World Bible School is contrary to biblical principle. Let the church be the church and WBS operate without infringing upon the autonomy of the church. Anything short of this is unscriptural and we should not be partakers with them unless they amend to soothe the purpose of the Scriptures and God's purpose for the church.

JAMAICA PATOIS WISDOM (No. 15)

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 - Trouble nuh mek up like rain

English - Bad situations do not cause the sky to become overcast like rain

Meaning - Bad situations should not put a cloud over our whole life.

Years ago we had a cartoon character in our papers named Joe Btfsplk. Wherever he was, there was a cloud over his head. He was a pretty sad looking fellow. The only luck he seemed to have was bad luck. I think I have known people like that—always gloomy—always “woe is me.”

Obviously, life is not always sunshine and roses. Into every life some rain must fall, and our Lord never promised a life free of pain and sorrow. But what we do with our misfortunes makes all the difference in the kind of life we have.

Consider Paul's situation as he spent day after day in a prison cell—probably the Mamartine Prison in Rome. His cell was a dungeon below the street, hewn out of rock, cold, damp and dark. And why was he in prison? For the crime of preaching Christ. And some of his “brethren” were trying to make things harder for him. But rather than feeling sorry for himself, he pointed out that his imprisonment was actually causing the gospel to be spread. “What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice” (Philippians 1:18).

I knew a young woman many years ago who suffered from crippling arthritis. Marian White was bound to a wheelchair, and could do little to take care of herself. But she had a cheerful disposition, and used her good mind to write children's Bible story books.

A close friend in Jamaica is a total invalid. Mahlon Mauta was paralyzed from the neck down in a fall years ago. He cannot even feed himself. His wife has abandoned him. We spend time with him on each trip to teach in Jamaica, and he always has a smile, and never complains. At times he has invited many neighbors over for a Bible study.

My brother-in-law, John Iverson, is 94 years old and confined to an assisted living home. He lives in pain. But you would never know it from his cheerful attitude. And he regularly has Bible studies with young people who come to his room. (Brother Iverson recently passed away. - KS)

Myrtle lived in a convalescent room for 25 years. She was blind, nearly deaf, and suffering from disfiguring facial cancer. What did she do with her time? She sang spiritual songs. She thought about Jesus. “I think about how good he's been to me.”

Now back to Paul. How could he rejoice in his situation? “I have

learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:11b-13).

It's all in the attitude of the heart!

THE BEATITUDES (5)

Patrick Farish | Lancaster, Texas, USA

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy" (Matthew 5:7)

Probably we cannot begin any study about "mercy" without first citing the statement in James, that "judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment" (23). And of course that is what Jesus is teaching in this beatitude, they shall receive mercy who are the merciful! God is rich in mercy (Ephesians 2:4); and He saves "according to his own mercy" (Titus 3:5). If we want mercy, we must be merciful. "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36).

Jesus told of a servant, who owed his master ten thousand talents, and could not pay. The servant, who was to be sold, implored his master to be patient with him; his master "out of pity for him" forgave him; a merciful master. Then this servant found one of his fellow servants who owed him a small amount; and demanded payment. When payment was not forthcoming he had his fellow servant imprisoned. When his master heard of this, he said to him "I forgave you all that debt ... And should not you have had mercy ... as I had mercy on you? ... So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart" (Matthew 18:23-35).

Now is the time to appeal for mercy (Romans 12:8).

ROMANS THE EIGHTH CHAPTER (No. 10)

This series of articles by the late Elmer Moore is reprinted from **Truth Magazine** by permission of the editor.

Our attention will be focused on verses 16 and 17. In verse 16 the writer declares that there are two "spirits" involved in testifying that "we are children of God." Whatever is involved will be in harmony with his declaration in verses 14&15. They all declare the same effect or result, - that one is a "son of God" or "child of God." In verse 15 the writer declares that those led by the Spirit of God are "Sons of God." In verse 15 he writes that as sons of God they serve, not as slaves in bondage, but as children adopted into God's family (see comments on that verse in previous article). In verse 16 Paul declares that the testimony involved is "that we are children of God."

What is meant by the expression, "The Spirit himself (itself, KJV) beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God"? Space does not allow a discussion of the many conflicting views about how this is accomplished. We must address our thoughts to the text itself.

It has been our contention thus far that the Spirit is named for His law introduced in Romans 8:2. Thus one is walking after the Spirit by submitting to the Spirit's law (verse 5). The Spirit of God dwelleth in him (verse 9) when he is subject to the "Spirit's law," the law of God (8:7, see article #6). One is being "led by the Spirit of God" when he allows the Spirit's law to direct his thinking and his life. Respect for the immediate context demands that I not lose sight of this fact when I discuss the witness of the Spirit.

The passage declares that the "Spirit" bears witness with our "spirit." The language suggests agreement between these two witnesses. In a court of law witnesses are present to give testimony about a matter. A witness is called and testifies. Another is placed on the witness stand and testifies. Their testimonies agree. Thus there is agreement between the two witnesses.

The Spirit bears witness in precisely the same way He leads (verse 14).

The Holy Spirit has testified in His law what man must do in order to be a child of God. The law of the Spirit testifies a man must have faith in Jesus Christ as the divine son of God (John 8:24), repent of His sins (Luke 13:3), and confess with the mouth Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9). He must be baptized into Christ where he becomes a child of God (Romans 6:3,4; Galatians 3:26-27).

In precisely the same way the Spirit has testified in His law that the child of God is to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:5-7). This walk involves walking after the Spirit (Romans 8:4). Walking after the Spirit involves being subordinate to the Spirit's law (Romans 8:7), putting to death the "deeds of the body" (Romans 8:13), being "led by the Spirit of God" (Romans 8:14), doing God's will as an adopted child and not as a slave (Romans 8:15).

When man submits to the Spirit's law in the above described manner there is agreement between the Spirit's law and the spiritually minded. Foy Wallace wrote, "The verses that refer to the witness of the Spirit apply to rendering service to God as sons of God, and not as slaves; and the spirit of sonship in which we serve God agrees with the witness or testimony of the Holy Spirit regarding our sonship" (**The Mission and Medium of the Holy Spirit**. 68). "The language of my text indicates, conclusively, that in this great subject there must of necessity be the **testimony of the Holy Spirit** and the **testimony of the spirit**, and the two must coincide, must agree, must not contradict each

other as witnesses.” (James W. Zachary, **The Witness of the Spirits**. 13).

I would add to this statement that the Holy Spirit has given His testimony: It is His law (Romans 8:2). The spirit of man, by putting to death the deeds of the body (Romans 8:12,13), shows by his life his testimony, and there is **agreement**, between the two.

The writer declares, “and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with Him”(verse 17). As children of God one is promised an inheritance - “An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heavens... unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:3-5). This inheritance is not unconditional. The writer declares, “if so be that we suffer with him,” if we are willing to suffer and not allow the trials of life to cause us to fail (2 Timothy 2:8-13).

HOW TO ANSWER A FALSE DOCTRINE

Sean P. Cavender | Bradley, Arkansas, USA

Quite possibly one of the most difficult things you will ever have to deal with is your approach to false teaching. There are many factors that one must give thought towards in this important discussion. False teachers have been a plague to the Lord's church since the days of the apostles. Paul identified false brethren who had snuck into the churches of Galatia (Galatians 2:4). Peter warned of how false brethren would distort the teachings of Scripture to suit their own purposes (2 Peter 3:16). John warned of many deceivers that were in the world, and identified their deception as anti-Christ doctrine (2 John 1:7). Jude dealt very plainly with false teachers, identifying their false teachings, and warned of how God deals with such false teachers (Jude 1:4)

The Intent of False Doctrine

Knowledge of false teaching is necessary because we must be prepared to answer false doctrines so that others will not be swept away by these deceivers. It is important to know how to answer false doctrines. It should come as no surprise that there will be those who are maliciously striving to lead people away from the truths contained in God's word. The object of false doctrine is not to benefit you. False teachers proclaim their doctrine in order to gain followers, gain popularity, and to cause harm to the Lord's body. Paul warned of how he would not give a platform for these false teachers to proclaim their deceptions because of their intent to lead people astray (2 Corinthians 11:12-15; Galatians 2:5). We must be extremely cautious towards false doctrines and those who espouse such things.

Jude exhorted brethren to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3). We need to be

ready to embattle those who would deliver some false teaching to the churches. There seems to be a growing number of people who do not want to hear sermons on false teachings. Some might object because they feel it is mean-spirited to identify such false teachers and their doctrines, but how else might we warn brethren to remain faithful and be guarded against such falsehoods? If we do not contend, or fight, for the truthfulness of the gospel then we are laying the perfect groundwork for false teachers to come in as the guardians of truth and deceive us. It is for this reason that Paul encouraged Titus to rebuke false teachers sharply (Titus 1:13). We must not be mean, but we must not give them an inch. False teachers will be argumentative, and strong in their teaching. We must be equally strong with our presentation of truth.

How NOT To Answer A False Doctrine

When we are answering a false doctrine, and false teachers, there are some things that we must **not** do.

1. Don't get personal. We are to remain in control of ourselves, and especially our temper, when we are dealing with false teachers. When answering their doctrine, do not attack the person. We should not give others a way in which they find fault in us, and will not hear us. Attack the false teaching, not the person.
2. Don't answer an argument that wasn't made. We need to be prepared to listen to those who are espousing the false doctrine, and be ready to answer what they are teaching. If we waste our time dealing with arguments they never made then how does that benefit anyone? It is also not dealing with the doctrine that they are actually teaching. If we are to stamp out the false doctrines that may enter the Lord's church, then answer the arguments that are being made in attempts to deceive.
3. Don't accuse a person of believing the consequences of their doctrine. There may be several consequences of believing any number of false teachings, but that does not necessarily mean they accept the logical consequences of their position. Point out, and teach them the logical consequences of accepting such a false position, but do not accuse them of something that they do not believe.

How To Answer A False Doctrine

First, you must identify the false doctrine. When identifying false teaching, you must identify the source of that teaching. The Holy Spirit was quite plain in revealing the desire of these false teachers - they desire to lead people astray (Galatians 2:4; 2 Timothy 2:14; 2 John 1:7). It will only benefit you to have knowledge of those who are teaching falsely, and what they are teaching. The Scriptures teach that faithful brethren need to mark and identify false teachers (Romans 16:17).

Secondly, you must be fair towards false teachers. You cannot misrepresent their doctrine. You do not want others to sympathize

towards them because of your unfairness. Acknowledge what they say, and answer the false teaching. If they say they do not believe in something, do not force it upon them. If they are attacking you, be courteous towards them. Do not sink to their level. Conduct yourself as a Christian at all times, especially when dealing with false teaching.

Thirdly, study to show yourself approved (2 Timothy 2:14-15). Paul warned Timothy of false teachings, the need to be aware of those false teachings, and how he must study the truth to be prepared to encounter those false doctrines. If we are not continually studying the word of God then we are prime candidates to be deceived by some who might be well studied, and dynamic speakers (2 Peter 2:2). A false teacher will not claim to be a false teacher. We must be ready, and guarded.

Fourthly, deal with objections. When you encounter false teachers they will certainly have objections to the truth of the gospel. You need to be ready for their objections. Sometimes it will require additional study, but it is essential in trying to stamp out their false notions. Patience and longsuffering are essential qualities that will help you in dealing with these teachers. Do not ignore their teachings, and squabbles. Deal with their arguments and objections to the truth.

Conclusion

We must be prepared and constantly ready to deal with false teaching. The main purpose when answering false teachers is the salvation of their souls. Never forget that. They must acknowledge the falsehood of their doctrines, and the truthfulness of the gospel. They must recognize they are fighting against the Lord. Will you help lead them out of their error?

EMOTIONALISM: HAVE WE GONE TOO FAR?

Tanner Campbell | Piggott, Arkansas, USA

Living in the age after the charismatic religious revival, emotionalism still holds its powerful influence today in many religions, exchanging what is true for what is personally emotional. Or, even further, exchanging what is true for the false feeling of a personal indwelling of the Spirit. No matter how extreme the case, it is evident that we are fighting for what is true and scripturally authorized by Christ against what others feel is right, trusting in their own emotions. It is indeed a war between good and evil. But fellow brethren, let us not allow emotion on our part to be a casualty of this war! It is so natural for man to fight against a thing so hard that he ends up so far away from it that he himself has lost a proper balance. When congregations try to keep themselves far from the notion of being called charismatic, they can easily end up too far on the other side, becoming dry, lifeless, without emotion for their worship and life for Christ. Is that acceptable or pleasing to God? Without a doubt, it is wrong to be driven by emotion to do what is not authorized in the bible. But is it wrong to have emotion when doing what is in accordance with God's commandments?

In John 21:15, when Peter told Jesus that he loved (Greek: *phileo*, a general term for affection) Him, was he wrong to feel that way? When Jesus overturned the tables of the businessmen in the temple (John 2:13-17), was He in the wrong? No, the text records "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up." Are we to keep ourselves away from zeal, even zeal that eats us up? Looking around at the "valley of dry bones" that are some congregations today, I'd be inclined to say that many are against the very emotions that our Lord had for Father God. Maybe it is all a simple misunderstanding: Zeal is not wrong. Zeal that is not according to knowledge is wrong (Romans 10:2).

I wonder what emotionalism has to do with the cause and effect of evangelism. When fewer churches are growing at a good pace, is it the cause of Christians lacking the proper emotion for lost souls? Have we forgotten the bursting emotion of Paul for his lost countrymen in Romans 9:1-3: *"I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh"* Notice how Paul begins. Why would anyone begin a dictation with "What I'm about to say is true, I am not lying, God is my witness"? Probably because what they are about to say is hard for someone to believe to be true. Indeed, it would be hard for the Jews to accept Paul's true feelings for them, as he speaks of his "great sorrow and continual grief." Sounds like a lot of emotion, but how far is Paul willing to go? Well, as he states, he is willing to lose his own relationship to his beloved Savior, and thus be lost eternally, in exchange for the salvation of the Jews. It is manifested here, that a huge element to Paul's willingness to spread the gospel of Christ is his own emotion toward lost souls. Is he wrong to harbor such feelings? Does this make him a Charismatic?

If I were out shopping with my beautiful family of four, and a man ten yards away pulls out a gun, points it at my son, and pulls the trigger with no time for myself to be able to grab my son up or position myself in front of him to take the bullet, I am helpless. But, out of nowhere, a stranger leaps in front of my son, and falls to the ground with the bullet in him, soon to be dead within minutes. What would my reaction be? A passing "thanks," from a dry, emotionless countenance? Certainly not! But an intense outpour of emotions numbering ten thousand times ten thousand!

Let's consider another situation. A man so deeply found in sin, is faced with the inevitable sentence of everlasting torture in hell because of the choices he is making in his life. But, even though this man was not deserving of such kindness, another man suffered greatly, even to his own death so that this vile man of sin could escape the condemnation of hell and become blameless, holy, and worthy of eternal life. What would the reaction of this once sinful man be? Would the gift of eternal life, given without merit, be accepted without even an emotional "thank you"? Or would this now pure man feel the effects of his emotion toward this Savior of his for all eternity?

Is this not what Jesus did for all of us? "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even

dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Romans 5:7-9). What should our natural, logical, and scriptural reaction to Him be? Would our prayer of thanks to God for this Savior be dry? Would our song of praise to Him be nearly lifeless and practically mute? Would our life in service to Him be without zeal to do all of His desire? Or do we have more zeal toward our favorite television show than we do toward Christ? Are we more excited to see the newest movie, than to go to worship? Do we justify these actions with the thought that we aren't supposed to be involved in emotionalism? Brethren, have we gone too far? Think on these things.

BORN HOMOSEXUAL?

Mike Thomas | Beaver Dam, Kentucky, USA

If people are born gay, as some are saying, what genetic difference is there between a homosexual and heterosexual? What scientific proof is there of a "gay gene"? And if people are born that way, how do some abandon that lifestyle?

A lot is said about people "coming out of the closet," in announcing their homosexuality, but there are also many stories of people who have decided to no longer be gay. "A 5-year study of lesbians found that over a quarter of these women relinquished their lesbian/bisexual identities during this period: half reclaimed heterosexual identities and half gave up all identity labels" (godandscience.org). How is that possible if people are genetically "wired" to be homosexual? Can a black person "relinquish" being black or a white person "decide" not to be white? Then how are homosexuals departing from that lifestyle if it is in their genes? Certainly, we can see the truth. People are homosexual because they choose to be.

Regardless, God does not permit a person to engage in same-sex desires. He has never approved of it (Jude 7). In the Law of Moses, He said, "You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination" (Leviticus 18:22). He says the same in Christianity (Romans 1:26-28). Those who want to be in fellowship with Him must repent of homosexuality (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). We can listen to men in trying to justify sin, but the bottom line is God does not permit a person to engage in homosexuality. Thus, "For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:5-6).

WHAT CAN I GET OUT OF IT?

Samson & Delilah | Judges 16

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

William J. Stewart | Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Let nothing be done for selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. (Philippians

Selfishness And Misuse

In the book of Hebrews, we read:

"And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah... who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of aliens" (Hebrews 11:32-34)

Certainly, some of these accomplishments can be found in the life of Samson, and yet it seems awkward for him to be listed in the "hall of faith." But, there he is!

As commendable as some of Samson's actions were, and as much good as was accomplished through him for the people of Israel in the days of the Judges, he was not an example for men to follow with regard to marriage. Whether it be his relationship with Delilah (Judges 16), the woman of Timnah (Judges 14:1-15:6) or the harlot in Gaza (Judges 16:1), Samson's brute conduct leaves much to be desired.

It is noteworthy that we are not specifically told that Samson and Delilah were married. It is evidence that they at least dwelt together, whether married or not. But why were they together? What brought Samson to Delilah? What attracted Delilah to Samson? For Samson, it does not appear to be the mutual intimacy and care which God describes for marriage (Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:22-33; etc.). He wanted the Timnite woman because she pleased him (Judges 14:2, 3, 7). Companionship? Hardly. The text indicates that he spent more time apart from her than with her (Judges 14:8, 19-20; 15:1-2). Perhaps Judges 16:1 identifies what Samson's interest in women was,

"...Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her."

Could Samson's interest in women have been merely sexual satisfaction?

What of Delilah's love for Samson? Was it authentic? No sooner were she and Samson together but we see the lords of the Philistines asking her to hasten his destruction, and she was willing.

"Entice him, and find out where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him and afflict him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver." (Judges 16:5)

Was she with Samson for love, or for gain? Immediately we're told,

"So Delilah said to Samson, 'Please tell me where your

great strength lies, and with what you may be bound to afflict you." (Judges 16:6; cf. v 10, 13)

Eventually, we are told that she "...pestered him daily..." about it (Judges 16:16). What a relationship! He was with her for sexual gratification, and she was with him for financial gain. They were together, not to serve the other and benefit the other, but to get what each could get from the other.

Honesty And Integrity

Honesty and integrity are foundational elements in any relationship, but especially so in the husband/wife relationship. If a man cannot trust his wife with the private issues of his life, or vice versa, how can the two be one flesh?

It is evident that Samson did not trust Delilah. Multiple times she asked him the source of his great strength, and how it might be subdued - he did not trust her with such information. Sadly, he was right not to trust her. Her inquiry was completely devoid of integrity. It would be akin to asking, for the purpose of entrapment, what sins another struggles with.

Three times she accuses him of lying (Judges 16:10, 13, 15). She is right, he did lie. But, three times and much more, she was guilty of manipulation and conspiracy against her "lover" (Judges 16:6, 10, 13, 16). Finally, she made an emotional appeal,

"How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me?" (Judges 16:15)

Such is an example of the mess that exists when a relationship is "built" upon sexual appetite, greediness and the like, rather than mutual love, affection, and concern for one another.

The end result? Delilah received her money (Judges 16:18); Samson lost his eyes and was cast into prison (Judges 16:21); and eventually lost his life (Judges 16:30).

BE SURE YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

*"But if you do not do so, then take note, your have sinned against the LORD; and **be sure your sin will find you out.**"* (Numbers 32:23)

Israel had completed the forty years in the wilderness and had conquered all those who opposed them on the Eastern side of Jordan - the king of Arad, the Caananite (Numbers 21:1-3), Sihon king of the Amorites (Numbers 21:21-25), Og king of Bashan (Numbers 21:33-35), and the five kings of Midian (Numbers 31:7-8). Moses would soon be called to the top of Mount Nebo, to Pisgah, the height, there die, and be buried in the unknown wilderness grave. The men of the tribes of Reuben and Gad came to the aged man of God and requested, "If we have found favor in

your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan” (Numbers 32:5). Moses was very angry with them, and accused them of discouraging their brethren from taking the land, just as their fathers had done and had perished in the wilderness (Numbers 32:5-15). So the men of Reuben and Gad promised they would go with their brethren across the Jordan and take the land, but they would leave their wives and children in Bashan and return there after the land was subdued (Numbers 32:16-19). Moses agreed they could settle on the Eastern side of Jordan, but first they had to help the other tribes take the land. Then Moses solemnly warned, “But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.” How do our sins find us out?

Moses is here personifying sin, even as the Lord did when He warned Cain about his attitude after the Lord has rejected his sacrifice. “If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it” (Genesis 4:7). Sin was like a wild beast waiting at the door to pounce on Cain, unless Cain did well. But Cain should rule over sin. Cain didn’t, and sin devoured him.

Likewise, the sin we commit is like a ravenous beast stalking us. We can run, but we can’t hide. “Be sure your sin will find you out.”

God sees and knows every wicked deed we commit, every evil word we say, and every sinful purpose we conceive in our hearts. “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:13).

There are many ways men imagine their sins to be hidden from God. But none of them are successful.

Careful Concealment

Careful concealment of our sins cannot hide them from the Lord. When the brothers of Joseph sold him into slavery in Egypt, they concocted a clever ruse to cover their sins (Genesis chapter 37). They coldly dipped Joseph’s coat of many colors into the blood of a kid of the goats, “brought it to their father and said, ‘We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son’s tunic or not?’” Jacob fell for the deception.

And he recognized it and said, ‘It is my son’s tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces.’ Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, ‘For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning.’ Thus his father wept for him (Genesis 37:33-35).

Undoubtedly they had not reckoned on the grief they would cause

their father, but they had successfully hidden their crime from Israel - but not from the Lord God.

Unknown to them the Lord was preparing Joseph through his ordeals in Egypt to be a great deliverer. When the sons of Israel went to Egypt to buy grain, Joseph, who had been elevated to second place in all the kingdom, recognized them, but they didn't recognize him. He tested them and arranged to rescue his full brother Benjamin from their jealousy.

When Joseph's silver cup was found in the mouth of Benjamin's grain sack, and the brothers in despair returned to Joseph's house, Judah, the very brother who had proposed selling Joseph into slavery, freely admitted the lesson he had learned.

Then Judah said, 'What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found' (Genesis 44:16).

Indeed, God had found out their iniquity. Regardless of how clever we may be, we cannot hide our sins from God. **"Be sure your sin will find you out."**

Refusal to Admit

We cannot hide our sins by refusing to admit them. The Lord through Samuel sent King Saul to destroy all the Amalekites. Samuel commanded Saul, "Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey" (1 Samuel 15:3). Saul took an army of 210,000 and killed the Amalekites.

But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed (1 Samuel 15:9).

When Samuel met Saul, Saul claimed, "I have performed the commandment of the LORD" (1 Samuel 15:13). Samuel replied, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" (1 Samuel 15:14) Saul blamed it on the people, but Samuel wasn't buying it.

Even after Samuel rebuked him, Saul still refused to admit he had sinned and persisted in blaming the people for saving the good animals to sacrifice to the Lord. Samuel scathingly replied:

Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you

from being king (1 Samuel 15:22-23).

Saul's stubborn, rebellious refusal to admit his sin cost him the kingdom and his soul. **"And be sure your sin will find you out."**

Lapse of Time

Some people think because a sin they committed was a long time ago, the Lord will and people should just forget about it. Solomon was primarily referring to divine punishment when he observed, "Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11). Just like King Agag, they reason, "Surely the bitterness of death is past" (1 Samuel 15:32). It wasn't for him, and it's not for impenitent sinners today. Twenty-two years elapsed between the time the brothers sold Joseph into slavery and the day they realized "God has found out" their iniquity (cf. Genesis 37:2; 41:46; 45:6). Time does not erase the guilt of sin, nor does God forget. **"And be sure your sin will find you out."**

Good Deeds

Nor will any number of good deeds by the sinner atone for his sins. "Tobiah, the Ammonite official" worked against Nehemiah and the Jews every step of the way as they rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:10,19; 4:3,7-8; 6:12-13). The nobles of Judah reported to Nehemiah the "good deeds" Tobiah had done (Nehemiah 6:17-19). But Nehemiah prayed that God would remember him according to his works (Nehemiah 6:10-14). The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), and you cannot do enough community service to offset the death penalty. We're not saved by works done in righteousness but by the grace of God (Titus 3:5). **"And be sure your sin will find you out."**

Death

It seems virtually all preachers think the death of the sinner eliminates the guilt of sin. Did you ever hear a funeral preacher declare he knew the deceased was in hell? Regardless of the sinful life they've lived, the vast majority of preachers "preach them into heaven." That's not the kind of funeral sermon Peter preached for Judas (Acts 1:16-25). Peter observed Judas had gone "to his own place" (verse 25). I don't think "his own place" is heaven. After Solomon had poetically described the debilities of old age and then death (Ecclesiastes 12:1-7), he concluded the words of the preacher by declaring, "For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14). The daughters of Zelophehad observed that their father "died in his own sin" (Numbers 27:1-3). **"And be sure your sin will find you out."**

Generally Righteous Life

I have heard and read brethren argue that a man who had lead a generally righteous life and had a sin or two of which he had not repented wouldn't be held accountable for those sins. They have

the emotional “what if” story. Why, what if a man was a godly, upright elder of the church, had just gotten his first new suit in years, a taxi splashed muddy water on it, he let a filthy word escape his lips, and then was hit by a bus and died instantly. Surely - sob, sob - God wouldn’t hold that against him. I’ll let the Lord judge any such cases, including the ones where the fellow was on his way to be baptized and was killed. But here’s some passages to chew on. “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment” (Matthew 12:36).

But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die (Ezekiel 18:24).

Simon, a babe in Christ, sinned one time (Acts 8:5-20), and Peter warned him, “For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:23, English Standard Version). **“And be sure your sin will find you out.”**

Ignorance

Which leads to another excuse. Recently I heard a new Christian claim that one who had sinned through ignorance is nonetheless righteous, since he didn’t know he was doing wrong. If that’s the case, don’t teach him right from wrong, or he’ll be guilty.

Ignorance is indeed bliss! Under the Law the one who sinned in ignorance was guilty (Leviticus 4:2-3, 13, 22, 27; 5:17). Simon sinned through ignorance - he thought he could buy the gift of God with money - but was still “in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:20-23). “And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch” (Matthew 15:14). **“And be sure your sin will find you out.”**

Imputation of the Righteous Life of Christ

About forty years ago some brethren borrowed the Protestant doctrine of the imputation of the life of Christ to the believer in a modified form. Protestants teach that God imputes (sets down to one’s account) the righteous life of Christ to the believer so that God doesn’t see the believers sins but only sees the righteousness of Christ. This is the basis of the Calvinistic doctrine of the eternal security of the believer, also called the impossibility of apostasy or once saved - always saved. The brethren modified it to just cover sins of ignorance and weakness but not sins of high handed rebellion.

The word that can be translated “impute” is found thirty-nine times in the New Testament, and eleven of those occurrences are in Romans chapter four. Thus, Romans four is the heart of biblical teaching on imputation. The principle of imputation is stated by the apostle Paul in Romans 4:5: “But to him who does not work

but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.” To the one who does not do the works of the Law of Moses (Romans 3:27-28), but believes on Christ, as manifested by obedience to the faith (Romans 1:5; 16:26-27), his faith is accounted (imputed to him) in order to righteousness. God doesn't give us credit for the righteous life of Christ; He gives us credit for our own faith, shown by the obedience of faith, and by means of that obedient faith we are forgiven and made truly righteous. God doesn't cover up our sins with the life of Christ, He forgives our sins when we by faith obey Him. **“And be sure your sin will find you out.”**

Continuous Cleansing

Also about forty years ago the doctrine of continuous cleansing became popular with brethren. As advocated by Kenneth S. Wuest, brethren claim, “... the blood of Jesus ... keeps constantly cleansing us from sins of omission, sins of ignorance, sins we know nothing about in our lives...” (**Word Studies in the Greek New Testament**. 2:102-3). This doctrine is based on a misunderstanding of First John 1:7, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” We are told that the present tense of the verb “cleanses” means constant and continuous. But First John 1:7 doesn't even mention sins of ignorance. It plainly says “all sin.” If we're continuously cleansed of sins of ignorance, we're also constantly cleansed of high handed rebellion. If saying a dirty word in anger is covered, so is drunkenness, adultery, and murder.

But First John 1:9 reveals when the cleansing takes place. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” “Confess” is also present tense. The cleansing occurs when the confessing takes place. **“And be sure your sin will find you out.”**

General Confession of Sins of Ignorance

Which leads to our final excuse. Brethren advocate forgiveness of sins of ignorance by means of a general confession of sins of ignorance. We are told we just can't know all our sins, so the Lord will forgive us if we just confess our sinfulness. But the apostle specifically teaches, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). He doesn't say, “confess our sinfulness,” he says, “confess our sins.” Simon, a babe in Christ, sinned one time through ignorance and was guilty (Acts 8:5-23). The apostle Peter commanded him, “Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you” (Acts 8:22). To be forgiven, he had to come to a knowledge of his sin, repent of that sin, confess it (1 John 1:9), and pray for forgiveness of it. **“And be sure your sin will find you out.”**

The Deceptiveness of Sin

Sin appears to be very pleasant and desirable. Sharing gossip can bring pleasure (Proverbs 18:8), and alcoholic drinks are very alluring (Proverbs 23:29-35). But It is God's immutable law that sin pays its wages.

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life (Galatians 6:7-8).

Often sin pays wages in this life. Moses was not able to enter the promised land because he struck the rock when the Lord commanded him to speak to it (Numbers 20:7-12; Deuteronomy 34:1-6). Sexual sins lead to broken homes and disease (Matthew 19:9; Romans 1:27). Alcoholic beverages bring addiction (Proverbs 23:29-35).

But sin will most certainly pay its wages in eternity. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

How to Escape Sin

There is only one thing that will erase the guilt of sin, the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:13-14)

How can we receive the benefits of His blood sacrifice? We must repent, turn from, our sins. The alien sinner, one who is not a Christian, must act upon his faith in Christ (Romans 5:1-2) by repenting of his sins (Acts 3:19), confessing his faith in Christ (Romans 10:8-10), and being baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3-4). The erring child of God must repent, confess his sin, and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9). If we repent, the spiritual penalty for sin is lifted (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Sometimes there are penalties for sin in this life that even repentance will not lift. David repented of his adultery and was forgiven, but his child died (2 Samuel 11:1-12:23). Trouble in his family followed from then on, culminating in the heartbreak David experienced when his rebellious son Absalom was killed (2 Samuel 18:32-33). The Lord will forgive adulterers who have been put away for their adultery (1 Corinthians 6:9-11), but they must live single lives (Matthew 19:9).

Conclusion

I had a friend and brother when I lived in Florida with whom I was close. After I moved from Florida this brother left his wife and

moved in with another man's wife. The jealous husband shot my friend in the heart, killing him instantly, while my friend stood in the doorway where he and the man's wife were living together. He is in the hands of God, but he learned that sin does indeed pay its wages. If sin stains your soul, repent before it is too late. **"And be sure your sin will find you out."**



unless otherwise noted, answers to questions by Keith Sharp

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