

# August 2018

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- unless otherwise noted, answers to questions by Keith Sharp -

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Finally, brethren

**WHATEVER THINGS**

are true  
are noble  
are just  
are pure  
are lovely

PHILIPPIANS  
4:8

are of good report  
IF THERE IS ANY VIRTUE AND IF THERE IS ANYTHING PRAISEWORTHY –  
**meditate on these things.**

You can download this month's Meditate On These Things as a PDF file by clicking [here](#). Also, an archive of past MOTT issues is available at [christistheway.com](http://christistheway.com).

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*"The dying man seems to go into the dark valley alone. His friends accompany him as far as they can, and then they must give him the parting hand. They cheer him with their voice until he becomes deaf to all sounds; they cheer him with their looks until his eye becomes dim, and he can see no more; they cheer him with the fond embrace until he becomes insensible to every expression of earthly affection, and then he seems to be alone. But the dying believer is not alone. His Saviour God is with him in that valley, and will never leave him. Upon His arm he can lean, and by His presence he will be comforted, until he emerges from the gloom into the bright world beyond. All that is needful to dissipate the terrors of the valley of death is to be able to say, 'Thou art with me.'" (Albert Barnes, Notes on Psalm 23:4).*

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## The "Lost and Found" Bible

Lynn Camp | Amarillo, Texas, USA

(If you need a "pick-me-up" for the day, the following story will certainly lift your spirits and may even bring joyful tears to your eyes. How could we imagine that a Communist guard's hateful action could reap such a great harvest? Please read. - Jefferson David Tant, Roswell, Georgia, USA)

In July, 1961, I boarded the Danube Express at Vienna's West Train Station, traveling to Budapest behind the Iron Curtain. What a contrast between free Austria and Communist occupied Hungary - so dark and drab! Businesses were closed. Signs were banned. People hardly dared to speak or smile.

Carefully contacting names accumulated in Vienna, we met Ivan Martos, an officer of the National Bank of Hungary. He travelled to Vienna twice each year for bank conferences. Later, I arranged to meet Ivan at

West Train Station. When he arrived, he looked like he had lost his best friend. Indeed, he had. Ivan related his bitter experience. Guards had boarded the train at the next-to-last stop on the Hungarian side. Checking all passengers, they came to Ivan. His ID and travel documents were in order. But one guard made him open his briefcase. Finding Ivan's personal Bible, he held it up for all to see and angrily shouted, "What is a man in your position doing with a Bible?" Before Ivan could respond, the guard threw the Bible out of the window of the moving train.

About two years later, at another Vienna meeting with Ivan, he was as upbeat as he had been downcast before. He had received a postal package in Budapest - it was his Bible! An apologetic note explained:

*Our children were playing one day along the railroad tracks. They found your Bible. Not knowing what it was, one of them took it to his grandmother, who immediately recognized it as a Bible. Word spread quickly through the little village on the border. Some of our older people had possessed Bibles before they were banned and remembered the significance and power of the Word of God. We decided to conceal the discovery while those who so desired would make handwritten copies. That joyful task lasted two years. Please forgive our keeping your Bible so long. But you might like to know that we are now a secret band of about 30 who have baptized each other and seek to follow Jesus in our daily lives.*

*"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).*

"Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

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## Question from Canada about Lifting Up Hands in Prayer

### Question:

The Bible says lift up holy hands. Very few in the church of Christ obey this command. If a person were to be holding a church bulletin while lifting up holy hands with that be a sin ?? Because they are adding to the word just like instrumental music Eager to hear your reply AL

### Answer:

Thanks for the question. In First Timothy 2:8, the apostle Paul commands, "I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting..." Obviously he connects prayer with lifting up the hands. This was a customary Jewish posture in prayer (Psalm 28:2). But Paul knelt in prayer (Acts 20:36). The tax collector, whose prayer was commended by the Lord, stood and beat his breast as he prayed (Luke 18:13-14). So, shall we lift up our hands, kneel, stand, and beat our breasts in prayer? Obviously, since the Word of God is truth (John 17:17), and truth does not contradict itself, no specific posture in prayer is bound by the Lord. Whether one is holding a church bulletin or not is completely irrelevant, for that does not constitute another, additional item of worship, as instrumental music is another kind of music in contrast to singing, which is specifically commanded (Ephesians 5:18-19).

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## The "Disinherited" | Ephesians 5:3-7

Patrick Farish | Wauyahatchie, Texas, USA

In the beginning of this chapter the writer exhorted the people to imitate God. Imitators of God will "walk in love, as Christ loved us...." To walk in love is to "keep his commandments" (1 John 5:3).

Then immediately he begins to speak of things antagonistic to walking in love; and those to whom he speaks (including ourselves) should be frightened because of the grim prospects of those who persist in

such things. Having spoken of a broad spectrum of sin, Paul brings it to the climax by saying that one who practices those things “has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God” (verse 5).

An “inheritance” is usually something of value set to be bestowed by the maker of a will on a worthy heir. If, however, the would-be heir displeases the testator, he can be summarily dropped – “disinherited.” He has no recourse beyond appeal, and the testator is under no obligation to reconsider. In our text, the situation is as stated, and the outcome, in the absence of repentance, terrible to consider. God would have the people be aware of this outcome so that their behavior can be governed accordingly.

Things which would cause one to have “no inheritance in the kingdom of God and Christ” include sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness ... filthiness, foolish talk, and crude joking.

“Sexual immorality” (“fornication” in older translations) refers to all illicit sexual conduct: between people who are not married, people who are married to others (adultery), homosexuals, and incest.

“Impurity” (uncleanness) probably points back to sexual immorality as a description of those participating in such.

“Covetousness”: the desire for what belongs to another. In context of this passage, what belongs to another may refer to an adulterous yearning for the mate of another (Exodus 20:17). In verse five the covetous man is identified as “an idolater” – things or possessions or people so pursued as to be sought and trusted as a “god.”

“Filthiness” is descriptive of one who, in shameless pursuit of illicit gratification, cares not about his appearance before God or man. He may be immaculately groomed, but his character is filthy, even if such is known only to God.

“Foolish talk” is the babbling of those whose interests are only temporal, or carnal. Having nothing worthwhile on their minds to talk about, they talk about what is on their minds, sensual and inane – “foolish talk.”

Then, “crude joking.” Not all joking is crude, but sometimes one thing leads to another. We need to be concerned that our attempts at wit remain clean – if thereby we have nothing to say. Humorous remarks or observations are helpful in releasing stress; but we must keep them free of innuendo or double entendre, ie “a word or expression with two meanings, one often indelicate.”

The behavior that is appropriate is that which is proper among saints, and thanksgiving. That which is “proper” is sanctified behavior; Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17). In the face of temptation our appeal should ever be to the sanctifying (“setting apart”) word of God.

“Thanksgiving” is to confront these tainting words and temptations; God did not give these dirty activities, but – thankfully – He did provide the way of escape.

Paul warns the people that some might seek to deceive them. Today that effort is ongoing, people participating --- shamelessly – in activities embarrassing in animals, but publicly flaunted by these beast-like humans – by politicians, athletes, Hollywood types -- not all of them, but a significant number of them, in positions of influence and deception.

The thing they manage to ignore is that “because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” To the saints, the warning is “do not become partners with them ...”.

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## **If There Is A God - Why Does He Let Bad Things Happen? (2)**

Tommy J. Thornhill | Etna, Arkansas, USA

The reason God allowed the devil to enter the world, and bring sin and misery to mankind was something He placed in man when He formed him, something He did not give to the rest of His earthly creation. This is what we refer to as free will, the ability to make choices, to choose to do right and wrong. Why did God do this? Continue to reason with me.

Why would God give human beings something that they might abuse and prove to be so damaging to the perfect world He had created? After all, "God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So, the evening and the morning were the sixth day" (Genesis 1:31). For one who takes time to read God's inspired word, the Bible, in spite of all the things that have occurred in this world since placing Adam and Eve in the beautiful Garden of Eden, one thing is evident, God really loves His creation. In fact, we are told that "love" is the very essence of God. "He who does not love does not know God for God is love (emphasis mine t.t.; 1 John 4:8). He wanted human beings, whom He had created "in His own image," to love Him back. We should "love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). They would demonstrate this love for Him by keeping His commandments. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). In fact, the greatest commandment of God is to "love the LORD your God, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind" (your whole being -t.t.; Matthew 22:37).

Now, if God wanted man to love Him back, He had three choices. (1) He could make man into a robot programmed to respond with the push of a button. That would not be love, it would just be robotic repetition. (2) God could make man love Him, but we know that real love cannot be forced on anyone. One has to be free to give love or it's not true love. Even if one is forced to say, "I love you," it will not be heartfelt, real love. (3) So, if God wanted mankind to really love Him with a whole heart, He had to give human beings the ability to make choices, the freedom to love Him or not love Him. To do this He gave man what we call "free will," the freedom to make choices.

Someone has said, that "free-will," the ability to choose, was the most dangerous gift that God gave man. But, without this ability to make choices, how would human beings be able to ever love God wholeheartedly, fully and freely? So, in order for man's "free-will" to function, choices had to be present, where one could choose between them.

In order to produce an atmosphere where man would have to exercise this ability to make choices, God placed the first human pair in the Garden of Eden, while at the same time providing them an opportunity to exercise the ability to choose right from wrong. He gave them two commands to follow, one positive, and one negative. (1) The positive, tend and keep the garden (God did not make man to be idle). (2) The negative, do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of it you shall surely die (Genesis 2:15-17). In giving the first pair choices, God knew there was the possibility of them choosing evil, but, if so, it would be their choice. Since He had endowed them with the ability to choose good or bad, they needed to have something by which they could exercise this freedom. By giving them His two commands, they had the choice, obey Him or disobey Him.

The stage is set. Satan, in the form of a serpent, is allowed to enter the beautiful, tranquil Garden and entice Adam and Eve. The word of God does not reveal how the devil came into existence to be evil, but I am fully persuaded that God did not create the devil to do evil. But, by His own mind, knowing what is best in allowing man free will, He allowed the old serpent to tempt Adam and Eve into disobeying God. Using free will, they freely chose to eat the forbidden fruit and thus disobey God. By succumbing to the wiles of the devil, they introduced sin and death into the world. Sin, in turn, introduced death, both spiritual and physical, to all humanity. No, God didn't create the evil, but because of Adam and Eve's bad choices in using free will, sin and all the ensuing evils that would follow was brought into the world. Since that time sin and evil has been present causing mankind to be cursed with sin, and having to live in a sin-cursed world.

In case some are thinking to charge God with being mean-spirited, or making a mistake in allowing man to have free-will, note the following quotation by C.S. Lewis in his book, **The Case For Christianity**. Lewis

wrote:

*“God created things which had free-will. That means creatures which can go wrong or right. Some people think they can imagine a creature which was free but had no possibility of going wrong, but I can’t. If a thing is free to be good, it’s also free to be bad. And free will is what has made evil possible, Why, then, did God give them free will? Because free-will, though it makes evil possible, is also the only thing that makes possible any love or goodness or joy worth having.”*

What we have seen so far in answering the question, “If there is a God – why does He let bad things happen?”, is that it was never God’s original intention for His perfect world to become contaminated by sin. He had created a perfect world to be inhabited and enjoyed by perfect people. But, He wanted those created in His image to love Him because they wanted to, not because they were robots or forced to love Him. So, He gave man free-will which they abused by choosing to sin. Their yielding to sin made brought the curse of sin to them and to the world. So, we have to say that the root of the bad things that happen in this world is sin, not God. (In the next article I will discuss the various classifications of the bad things that happen in life and why it is unfair to blame God when bad things happen.)

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## **"We Persuade Men"**

Jim Mickells | Lewisburg, Tennessee, USA

The apostle Paul was a chosen vessel of the Lord, sent to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15). In writing his second epistle to the Corinthians he says, “Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences” (5:11). The word “persuade” is defined as, “Generally, to persuade another to receive a belief, meaning to convince, and in this sense used mostly with the acc. of person (Acts 14:19; 18:4, “he... persuaded the Jews,” meaning he sought to convince them; 2 Cor. 5:11)” (**The Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament**).

What was he trying to persuade them to do? “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20). Sin severs one’s relationship with the Father (Isaiah 59:1-2), so there is a need to be reconciled unto Him to no longer be His enemy but to enjoy His grace and favor, to restore the friendship which was once enjoyed. If an individual had not become a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) by being born of the water and the Spirit (John 3:3, 5), then certainly he needed to obey the gospel (Romans 10:16). Those who had been baptized into Christ yet had been overtaken in sin needed to repent (2 Corinthians 12:21). Then all “must walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

What means did Paul use to persuade these men to be reconciled to the Lord? “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). God’s word is His power unto salvation (Romans 1:16). It is just as powerful today as it was when the apostle revealed it to his audience during New Testament times. It is the only means given to us by Jehovah to be used in an effort to persuade men to faithful love and service to Him. We have no authorization to use some form of entertainment or the social gospel along with the word of God to convict and to convince men of their need of salvation offered through Christ. We must use what is given to us by the Father – the gospel of Christ.

Why did the apostle try to persuade these men? (1) In view of death – “For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed ...” (2 Corinthians 5:1). The only opportunity one has to be saved by the grace of God is while he is living (Hebrews 9:27; Luke 16:14-31). (2) Knowing we will stand before the Judge of universe and answers for the way we have conducted our lives – “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). There will be no favoritism shown, no taking the fifth

amendment, no plea bargain, there will be no loop hole in the law to escape the just judgment to be handed out by a just Judge, etc. (3) Because of the fear of God – “Knowing therefore, the terror of the Lord...” (2 Corinthians 5:11). Paul out of his great reverence and respect for God was fulfilling his apostolic office in preaching the gospel to the lost. They should respond to this message out their fear of the Lord as well. Yet it could also involve the fear of having their lives exposed and receiving the just reward for the deeds done in their bodies.

To motivate people to be reconciled unto God they should be reminded of death and the judgment which is to come. Yet all need to be brought face to face with the reality of the great love and mercy shown toward each by our Heavenly Father. Because of Christ’s love in dying for sinful men, we should be compelled to no longer live for self but for Him who died for us (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). Jesus was made to be sin for every man, so that we might become the righteous servants of our great God (2 Corinthians 5:21). He was the Lamb of God sacrificed for us (John 1:29); the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2). He suffered and died so that we might live. If nothing else has persuaded one to be reconciled to Jehovah this should. To all who are forgiven, and are now friends of the Father, they become the beneficiaries of His grace and goodness and there is awaiting them “a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Corinthians 5:1).

Do you need to be reconciled to the Lord? Listen to the word of God, let it guide and direct your footsteps in the paths of righteousness. May the love of Christ compel you to live the rest of your life for Him who died for you!

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## Reasons Not to Drink

Mike Thomas | Kokomo, Indiana, USA

Whether it's the Super Bowl or just another day after work, people turn to alcohol to escape the problems of life. What is even more amazing is some will still claim to be a follower of God as they drink. More and more Christians are filling their Facebook posts with them holding a glass of wine at a wedding or a cup of beer at a ball game. (Honestly, how will we persuade anyone to come out of the world by acting like that?!) I suggest to you there are reasons not to use alcohol, especially as a child of God.

For one, it leads to hell. You would think that would be reason enough to stay away from alcohol, but it's not. People actually think they can have their “adult” beverages for pleasure and still go to heaven. God has a different conclusion. He says to stay far away from the stuff because of the harmful effects it has on a person and how it ruins us spiritually. He warns, “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Proverbs 20:1). He also adds, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators...nor drunkards... will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

To any honest soul, those passages are clear instructions to avoid alcohol for recreational purposes. No other conclusion is reasonable! If He had said, “Whoever eats poison ivy is not wise,” would we reasonably conclude He wants us to eat poison ivy? Honestly friends, how plainer can God make it in telling us to avoid intoxicating drink? Was He kidding when He said, “Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly” (Proverbs 23:31)? And why did He issue that warning? “At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things” (vv. 32-33). Drinking impairs judgment and causes us to do things we would not normally do in a sober condition. Hence, whoever is lead astray by it is not wise.

The Bible is replete with the warning to stay away from every form of strong drink. Peter condemns every use of it, from the social drink to hardcore drunkenness (1 Peter 4:3-4). He says to avoid “drinking parties.” Question: when we are drinking wine at a wedding, are we at a drinking party or non-drinking party? The same is true regarding Paul’s warning in Romans 13:13, “Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness...” These passages make it clear that God wants us to have no association with alcohol

for recreational purposes. If we must turn to intoxicants, it is only to take "a little wine for the stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities" (1 Timothy 5:23). Other than that, God wants us to avoid strong drink and narcotics.

Some will turn to Jesus' turning water into wine as authority to get intoxicated today, but any good student of the Bible will know Jesus did not produce strong drink. The term wine had a broad use in the Bible, referring to anything from the grape. There is no way Jesus would have ignored the warnings from Proverbs regarding strong drink, and give people alcohol, then have Peter condemn social drinking years later. Experts agree that even our mildest forms of alcohol today would be comparable to the Bible's use of strong drink. "Today's wine is by Biblical definition strong drink...What the Bible frequently meant by wine was basically purified water" (Norman Geisler, Liberty University).

Furthermore, if Jesus served alcohol that day He violated other godly principles taught in the Law and prophets. Namely, Isaiah wrote, "Woe to men mighty at drinking wine. Woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink" (Isaiah 5:22). Had Jesus mixed intoxicating drink that day, He violated the very thing Isaiah condemned in unfaithful Israel. Sorry friends, I don't buy it. I refuse to believe Jesus became a bartender that day, but was instead serving non-intoxicating product of the grape.

Nothing good comes from alcohol. Whoever is led astray by it is not wise!

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## A Response to "THE BIBLE VERSUS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST" (6)

William Stewart | Kingston, Ontario, Canada

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Someone recently pointed me to an article claiming to expose the falsehood of the Church of Christ. We will be responding to the content of the article over a period of several months. The original article, by James L. Melton, can be found at [www.av1611.org/jmelton/chchurch.html](http://www.av1611.org/jmelton/chchurch.html)  
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### Water Baptism and Salvation

Mr. Melton rejects the necessity of baptism for one to be saved, and in fact identifies it as an "ancient pagan belief." How sad that he not only discounts the truth, but he calls what is specifically commanded in the Bible pagan.

The thief on the cross is the common battle cry of those who oppose the necessity of baptism. Melton is no different. He confidently exclaims, "...the thief on the cross was saved WITHOUT BEING BAPTIZED (Lk 23:42-43)." Agreed. I can find no text saying he was ever baptized; but the opposite is true as well - Melton can find no support to affirm he was not baptized. The Bible simply doesn't say. And it doesn't matter, because the thief is not an example of how to be saved in obedience to the gospel of Christ. Since the thief died **after** Jesus on the day they were crucified, Melton says, "the thief died in THIS PRESENT AGE," and therefore was subject to the terms of pardon in the Christian age. The church didn't begin immediately upon His death. After His resurrection, Jesus spent 40 days preparing the apostles (Acts 1:1-8). At the end of the forty days, He would commission them to preach the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-48), and still, they were restrained from doing so for another 10 days, until the day of Pentecost had come, when they would receive the Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8; 2:1-4). And on that day, Peter and the others used the keys of the kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19), the gospel message, and 3,000 souls responded and were added to the church (Acts 2:41, 47).

Melton tells us "the terms of pardon were made very clear a long time before Acts 2." Amen! However, the only term of pardon Melton lists is BELIEVING on Christ. Must one believe? Absolutely. Will faith alone save? Go ask James (James 2:14-26). In John 3:5 (which is before Acts 2), Jesus said, "...unless one is

born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." That, my friend, is a reference to baptism. Melton denies such, saying "the water is John 3:5 has nothing to do with water baptism." Unfortunately, he failed to tell us what the water refers to. John 3:5 is parallel to Titus 3:5 and Hebrews 10:22, each picturing water as being necessary in salvation. If the water is not baptism, what is it? It is Melton, not Jesus, who excludes baptism as a term of pardon in the gospels.

Melton wrote, "Church of Christ members are taught that there is only ONE kind of baptism: WATER baptism." That's either an honest misrepresentation or an outright lie. I'm not sure which. Either way, it is not true. The New Testament speaks about several different baptisms: the baptisms or washings among the Jews, John's baptism, Holy Spirit baptism, baptism into Christ, baptism of fire, baptism of Moses, baptism of suffering. Some of those involve water, some do not. That said, Paul wrote, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism..." (Ephesians 4:4-5). The apostle is not denying the existence of the different baptisms listed; but he is saying only one of them is active and valid. So, which is it?

Melton writes, "There is one baptism which is far more important than water baptism, and this baptism is the SPIRIT baptism that the new Christian receives when he receives Christ as Savior." I'd be happy to sit and discuss what the Bible says about Holy Spirit baptism with anyone who is willing to do so. But let me simply point out, Paul said there is "one baptism;" Melton affirms two baptisms with his statement. Every believer receives the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but Melton has mistakenly equated the baptism of the Spirit with the indwelling. They are not the same. If you will search the Bible, you will find the baptism of the Spirit was very, very limited.

Whether reading the Bible or any other document, we need to understand words according to their common use, unless something in the context demands otherwise. The word baptize (Gr. baptizo) means to immerse or submerge. Melton correctly states that one might be immersed in anything (fire, water, Holy Spirit). However, the common use of the word is to immerse in water. Over half of the references to baptism in the Bible specifically mention water in the context. And several others, though not specifically referencing water, infer water. The common use of the word baptize involves water. Melton tells us that Galatians 3:27 and Romans 6:3-4 are NOT referring to water baptism. Why not? Not because the context demands something other than the common use of the word? No. It is simply because Melton rejects the necessity of water baptism.

Melton has plenty more material to respond to on baptism and salvation. In fact, about half of his entire 9 page article against the churches of Christ focuses on baptism. The last several pages of his article are attempts to refute what he identifies as "proof texts" used by the Church of Christ (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3-4 & Galatians 3:27). We will respond to his arguments in our next article.

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## **Titles of Jesus: Overview**

David Cooper | Evening Shade, Arkansas, USA

There are many, many titles for Jesus in the scriptures but each imparts a lesson to us who believe in Him. One is the name given him at birth. It also has a grand and powerful meaning to saints, [Yeshua] Jesus, the salvation of Jehovah. All the Titles of Jesus can teach us important lessons:

- About his nature,
- Confirmation of who he is,
- What He means to us,
- Of his authority,
- Of his power, and
- Who we are in relation to Him.

Following are quick examples of some of these and what they should with the associated scriptures. I will



attempt in the future, God willing, to go into more detail on other **Titles of Jesus**.

Jesus is often referred as both Son of God and Man. Jesus called himself the Son of Man most often. Only a few examples are Matthew 8:20; 9:6; 11:19; 12:8. There are many examples of Jesus being referred to as the Son of God. God the Father calls him "Son" at his baptism, (Matthew 3:17) and at the mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5). There are others both followers and foes used to proclaim Jesus as the Son of God.

Of the Foes, the Devil himself implied Jesus is the son of God at the temptation of Christ (Matthew 4:3-6). The Devils, demons, at many times proclaimed that Jesus was the Son of God. Matthew 3:11 and 5:7 are but two examples. Even the Centurion at the crucifixion declared his heritage (Matthew 27:54 and Mark 15:39).

Now to those who loved Him. Mark begins his account of the Gospel, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Luke records this in Luke 1:32 of the coming birth of a virgin:

*"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."*

John the Baptizer declares he is the son of God in John 1:34, while, John the apostle declares him, "the only begotten of the Father."

The significance to Christians of his being the Son of man and the Son of God is that he was both God and man and can speak for both with personal knowledge and could be the sinless man who could be the sacrifice for sinners. He is a perfect mediator between God and man as he is both (1 Timothy 2:5-6). Who could be a high priest better to pray for his people than one who felt their pain? (Hebrews 2:17) He is the perfect sacrifice because of his perfect life as a man (Hebrews 2:14-16).

Jesus is often called "the seed." These titles are mainly for proofs that Jesus is indeed the promised Messiah (Galatians 3:16). Jesus had to be the seed of woman, uniquely, as per God's first mention of his coming (Genesis 3:15). He had to be the seed of Abraham to assure the Jews of his right to be the Messiah. The same is true of his being the seed of David. We see this in the prophecy (Isaiah 9:7; Jeremiah 23:5-6) and the fulfillment of the prophecy (Romans 1:3; Acts 2:29-30) of his being the seed of David.

Jesus was prophesied to be Shepherd to his people (Ezekiel 34:23 and Ezekiel 37:24). Jesus indeed fulfilled the prophecy of Ezekiel (Matthew 9:36; John 10:11-14; Hebrews 13:20). The true significance lies, however, in the relation of a shepherd to his sheep. Jesus makes this amply clear in John 10:11, 14, 27. Jesus would save his sheep and they will hear and obey him.

Jesus is often proclaimed King. Pilate proclaimed him King of the Jews (Luke 23:38; John 19:19, 22). The wise men wanted to know where the king of the Jews was (Matthew 2:2). His followers proclaimed him "the King that cometh in the name of the Lord" in Luke 19:38. In 2 Peter 1:11 Peter said we can be granted entrance into, "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Finally, Paul called Jesus, "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15-16).

If Jesus is King, as He is, then we as citizens of his Kingdom must be loyal. Paul says we as Gentiles" are "fellow citizens with the saints" (Ephesians 2:19). Jesus said, "all power is given to me in heaven and earth" (Matthew 28:18). Again, as all authority lies with Jesus, we as citizens of his kingdom must be loyal to our King (Romans 14:18).

"Messiah" is a title often and correctly attributed to Jesus. The title "Christos," "Christ" in English, is the Greek equivalent for "Messiah" in Hebrew. The word simply means "the anointed." A simpler definition is

“God’s chosen.” David is an example (1 Samuel 16:12). Jesus, in speaking to the woman at the well, said of the Messiah, “I that speak unto the am he” (John 4:25-26). The woman obviously believed Jesus was the Messiah (John 4: 29).

The apostles believed Jesus to be the Messiah. Andrew even before his calling said, “He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, ‘We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.’” Answering for the apostles, when ask if they would leave him as many disciples had stated, “And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:69). Peter in his sermon on Pentecost declared, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Paul was said to be pressed in the spirit to teach that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 18:5), and he, “mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ” (Acts 18:28).

Others also declared Jesus to be the Christ. An angel announced Jesus’ birth in this manner, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” Many Samaritans believed Philip’s teaching of the Kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ. Paul said the church at Corinth and all saints, “call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours” (1 Corinthians 1:2). After all, we are, “the churches of Christ” (Romans 16:16).

Without the title, Jesus Christ,” No Christian would or could be sanctified (Hebrews 10:10), preserved or called (Jude verse 1), redeemed and justified or have grace (Romans 3:1), atoned (Romans 5:11), or at peace with God (Romans 5:1).

In short we cannot be saved from eternal death as Paul told the young preacher Timothy,” This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”

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## **A Misunderstood Verse**

Sean P. Cavender | Bald Knob, Arkansas, USA

One of the most misunderstood passages in all the Bible is Matthew 7:1. You might even be able to quote it! Yet, you may wonder, “how can this verse be misunderstood; it is so simple.” “Judge not, that ye be not judged.”

So often when people might be confronted about a sin they are involved in, they will quickly run to this verse and tell the person that is bringing the sin to their attention, “You can’t judge me! The Bible condemns it.”

We should really look at the context of Jesus’ statement in Matthew 7. The Lord actually goes on to say, “For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (Matthew 7:2). We can see that Jesus is not condemning judgments altogether; in reality, He is regulating the judgments we make. Christ is encouraging us to use caution when we judge.

Jesus illustrates this principle in the next few verses. He uses a humorous illustration that very clearly makes the point. Before you criticize someone about a small issue, or some small offense on a matter of personal judgment, you better examine your own life first. Make sure before you try to scrape out the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye that you do not have a big ‘ole log protruding from your own eye (Matthew 7:3-4).

If you do not look within yourself then you are a hypocrite (Matthew 7:5). The first step is to remove the log from your eye. Then, and only then, will you be effective in taking out the speck from someone else’s eye.

Many will appeal to the Lord’s statement in Matthew 7:1, saying “judge not!” However, what the Lord is

trying to get us to see is that judgment and inspection is necessary. He goes on and says, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). Careful examination and inspection is necessary, in our own lives and in the lives of those whom we care about.

Perhaps we see someone in sin. They might be practicing sexual immorality, or stirring up strife, or even drunkenness (Galatians 5:19-21). The Bible clearly condemns such acts. It is not sinful, hypocritical judgment to appeal to God's word and show someone where they have sinned.

Sadly, many people do not want to be told that they are wrong. They do not want to be instructed in the ways of righteousness. People are too content with living in a way that is only going to bring pleasure to themselves in this life. And they often will hide behind Matthew 7:1.

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## Imputation

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Many have memorized the "five points of Calvinism" by the acronym "TULIP." None of those letters stands for "Imputation" - the "I" stands for "Irresistible Grace" - but "Imputation" is at the heart of the false theology known as "Calvinism." The great Calvinistic scholar Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield asserted, "the three-fold doctrine of imputation - of Adam's sin to his posterity, of the sins of His people to the redeemer, and of the righteousness of Christ to His people" is "the core of the constitutive doctrines of Christianity" (266). "Imputation," defined as transfer, is the mechanism by which Reformed (Calvinistic) theologians believe the "Five Points of Calvinism" work.

This foundational error of Calvinism has captured many brethren. During the Florida College Lectures of 1972 Brother Robert F. Turner met W. Carl Ketcherside in Tampa Florida in a public discussion of fellowship and the Christian's relationship to sin. Ketcherside, his cohort LeRoy Garrett, and their disciple, Edward Fudge had influenced a number of you men and some older ones away from the truth to a modified form of Calvinism through their writings and clandestine studies.

The supposed imputation of the righteous life of Christ to the Christian is the basic mechanism that Calvinists use to defend the doctrine of the "Perseverance of the Saints" (the "P" of the TULIP, "once saved - always saved," can't fall from grace). They contend God doesn't see the sins of Christians; He sees instead the righteous life of Christ thrown over the Christian like a mantle.

Our brethren who teach the imputation of the righteous life of Christ to the Christian have holes in their mantles. They believe God sees sins of rebellion but not sins of ignorance or weakness.

### Three Fundamental Errors

Three fundamental errors are at the heart of Calvinistic imputation. Calvinists assert, "It is therefore not sufficient for our justification that Christ suffered on our behalf..." (Landon. 186-189). **Calvinists deny the sufficiency of the blood sacrifice of Christ for our justification.** The inspired apostle Paul emphatically disagreed. He declared we are "justified by His blood" (Romans 5:9). The blood of Christ doesn't just partially justify us; it perfects us forever (Hebrews 10:14). Calvinism denies the central tenet of the gospel, justification by the blood of Christ. It is another gospel (Galatians 1:6-9).

The doctrine of transfer of guilt or righteousness portrays justification as an elaborate scheme of divine pretense. Calvinists contend, "... our sins are imputed to Christ and His righteousness is accounted as ours." Landon admits, "Our Lord is not 'made sin' in the sense that He actually became a sinner." He then states, "In like manner His righteousness is imputed to us." The parallel is that we are not really righteous, but God just pretends we are. As eminent Calvinistic theologian Charles Hodge states, "So when righteousness is imputed to the believer, he does not thereby become subjectively righteous" (3:145). It is all a sublime hoax. In stark contrast, biblical justification by the blood of Christ makes the sinner really, completely, righteous (Romans 5:18-19; Ephesians 4:24; 1 John 3:7).

Calvinists assert, "It is therefore required for justification either that we render perfect obedience unto God, or that a surety, appointed on our behalf, renders it in our place." That is sheer assumption without biblical proof. When we are cleansed by the blood of Christ, we are truly righteous (Romans 3:21-26). Yes, the Master assured the rich young ruler he would live if he kept the Law of Moses under which he lived (Matthew 19:16-17), but it is mere assumption to therefore assert God requires we present to him a sinlessly perfect life to inherit eternal life.

### **Fundamental Difference**

The fundamental difference between the Calvinistic theory of imputation and the Bible doctrine of imputation is that Calvinists assert we are credited with the righteousness of Christ that we might be justified whereas the Scriptures affirm we are justified by the blood of Christ that we might be righteous (Romans 3:20 - 4:25).

### **Legs of the Lame Unequal**

All three legs of Calvinistic imputation are the myths of human wisdom. It is unjust and false to contend God imputes Adam's sin to all mankind (Ezekiel 18:4, 20, 25). The Calvinistic covenant between Adam and his posterity, whereby we are charged with his sin, is unknown to Scripture.

Calvinists appeal to 2 Corinthians 5:21 as proof that God actually charged Christ with the sins of the elect. Calvinists admit Christ is not literally "sin." They assert without proof that the figure means our sins were imputed to Jesus. Why not take the figure to mean what we know is true, that Christ was made a sin offering for us? (cf. Isaiah 53:10; Ephesians 5:2) This is "metonymy," in "which one name or noun is used instead of another, to which it stands in a certain relation" (Bullinger. 538). This specific usage is the word "sin" to mean the "sin-offering" (Ibid. 584).

But those who teach "once saved - always saved" believe "The righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer for his justification" (Landon). I affirm **The obedience of faith of the believer is imputed to the believer for his justification.**

### **Definitions**

"Obedience of faith" (Romans 1:5; 16:26) can indicate either doing as directed because of faith in the heart or doing what the faith, the gospel (Galatians 1:11, 23), directs. Which is unimportant, for, in practicality, they are the same. The proposition denotes faith in the believer's own heart and his own obedience to the faith resulting from believing. To impute is "to reckon, take into account, or, metaphorically, to put down to a person's account...." (Vine. 2:252) The preposition "for," as used in my proposition, means "in order to." "Justification" is the act of being made righteous (Romans 3:21-28; 4:2-3), free from guilt under divine law, thus, acceptable to God.

### **Study of Romans Four**

The term translated "impute" (*logizomai*) occurs thirty-nine times in the New Testament, eleven times in Romans chapter four. The specific subject of this chapter is imputed righteousness. Thus, the defense of my position will simply be a brief study of Romans chapter four. Please read Romans 3:20 - 4:25 now.

In Romans 3:27-28 the apostle Paul contrasts two laws, two systems of justification, the law of works and the law of faith (Romans 3:27-28). We are justified by the law of faith rather than by the law of works (verse 28). The law by which we cannot be saved, the law of works, is the Mosaic covenant (Romans 2:12-20), the Old Testament.

The "works" Paul contrasts with faith in Romans and Galatians are works of the Mosaic covenant, works which would demand sinless obedience, would thereby earn justification, and would thus be grounds for boasting (Romans 4:2, 4, 6; 9:32; 11:6; Galatians 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10). "Faith" in Romans, rather than being "faith alone," is "the obedience of faith" (Romans 1:5; 6:17-18; 10:8-10; 16:26).

Many Jewish disciples flatly rejected Paul's proposition. They first thought the gospel was for Jews only (Acts 11:19), but the conversion of Cornelius convinced them otherwise (Acts 11:18). However, many still thought it was necessary to keep the law of Moses and to be circumcised (Acts 15:1, 5). Had they been correct in binding the law, perfect obedience would have been required; thus salvation would have to be earned, a matter of boasting (Galatians 3:10; Hebrews 10:4). These judaizers laid great stress on their physical relationship to Abraham (Luke 3:8; John 8:33). Paul showed that salvation is by the faith of Christ, the Gospel, rather than the law of Moses or any other law that demands sinless obedience (Romans 3:27-28).

In Romans 4:1-5 the beloved apostle presents the strongest possible case from a Jewish perspective for justification by faith apart from the law. Abraham, the friend of God, the patriarch of the Hebrew people, was justified by faith apart from the law.

"Flesh" in verse one includes the Jews' natural relationship to the fathers, the bodily mark of circumcision, and the law of Moses as a fleshly covenant (cf. Romans 9:8; 2:28-29; Hebrews 9:9-10). Abraham was justified before God with none of these. Abraham was not justified by works, i.e., keeping the law of Moses (verse 2). Rather, "For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness'" (verse 3; cf. Genesis 15:6). The pronoun "it" manifestly refers to the clause "Abraham believed God." Abraham's act of believing, i.e., his own subjective faith, "was accounted to him." "Accounted" is from *"logizomai,"* the Greek verb meaning to impute. The preposition "for" is the Greek *"eis,"* which has as its primary meaning *"into, in, toward, to"* (Arndt & Gingrich. 227). Thus, God set Abraham's faith down to his account in order that he might be righteous.

God accounted Abraham righteous by faith though Abraham never kept the law of Moses. He was first identified as a saved believer when He left the Ur of the Chaldees (Hebrews 11:8; Genesis 12:1-4). But later, when the Lord promised him his seed would be as the stars of heaven, "he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3). Many years later, he by faith was willing to offer Isaac (Genesis 22:1-18), and, once again, "the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness'" (James 2:23). Rather than being justified once at the beginning of his walk by faith, justification by faith is a summary of Abraham's life of faith.

Thus, to the one who does not keep the works of the law but believes, his faith is set down to his account in order that he might be righteous (Romans 4:5). This faith is the obedience of faith (Romans 1:5; 6:17-18; 10:8-10; 16:26). Therefore, **The obedience of faith of the believer is imputed to the believer for his justification.**

David, the man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), is also an example of righteousness apart from works (Romans 4:6-8). Paul quotes David's thanksgiving to the Lord (Psalm 32:1-2) as proof David was righteous by forgiveness of sins rather than by works (sinless law keeping). But Paul introduces this argument by saying David's righteousness was "just as" (verse 6) Abraham's (verse 3) and ours (verse 5). Thus, our righteousness is by forgiveness of our sins.

In verses 9-12 the apostle argues that Abraham was justified before he was circumcised, thus, we are justified without circumcision or keeping the Mosaic covenant, which circumcision demands (Galatians 5:1-4). When God imputed Abraham's faith to him, in order that he might be righteous (Genesis 15:6), Abraham was uncircumcised (cf. Genesis 17:24). Circumcision was a sign of the righteousness by faith he already possessed (Romans 4:11). Thus Abraham is the father of the faithful, whether they are circumcised or uncircumcised (Romans 4:11-12; Galatians 3:7). The faithful are those "who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised" (Romans 4:12). Thus, **The obedience of faith of the believer is imputed to the believer for his justification.**

In verses 13-22 Paul reasons that Abraham is our example of justification not by keeping the law but by

faith. Abraham was “heir of the world” (verse 13) in that all the world is blessed through him (Genesis 12:3; 22:18; cf. Psalm 2:8) and all may become his children by obedience of faith (Galatians 3:6, 26-29). The righteousness thus attained is by grace through faith rather than flawless law keeping (Romans 4:14-16). This accords with Abraham’s justification by faith (Romans 4:16-17; Genesis 17). Because Abraham’s faith was strong, his faith “was accounted to him for righteousness” (Romans 4:17-22). But Abraham’s faith was obedient faith. Thus, **The obedience of faith of the believer is imputed to the believer for his justification.**

The apostle concludes that Abraham’s justification by faith was recorded for our benefit (Romans 4:23-25; cf. 15:4). We also are justified by faith rather than works (keeping the law of Moses, sinless law keeping). We also are justified by means of faith, the obedience of faith. Righteousness is imputed to us on the basis of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Therefore, The obedience of faith of the believer is imputed to the believer for his justification.

### Review

Reread each of the eleven references to imputation in Romans chapter four. God set Abraham’s faith, shown in obedience, down to Abraham’s account, so he would be righteous (verse 3) . To the one who works (keeps the Law of Moses), righteousness is not set down to his account on the basis of grace, but of debt (verse 4). To the one who does not work (keep the Law of Moses), but believes (renders obedience of faith), his faith, shown in obedience, is set down to his account, in order that he might be righteous (verse 5). God imputes righteousness to man without the works of the law (verse 6). The man whom God forgives is blessed since God no longer sets sin down to his account (verse 8). Verse nine repeats the truth of verse three. Abraham’s faith was set down to his account so he could be righteous before he was circumcised (verse 10). God imputes the faith of the uncircumcised to them that He might impute righteousness to them also (verse 11). Again Paul repeats his theme first stated in verse three (verse 22). These principles are recorded for our benefit (verses 23-24). Our faith also, shown by the obedience of faith, is set down to our account in order that we might be righteous (verse 24). Therefore, **The obedience of faith of the believer is imputed to the believer for his justification.**

### Conclusion

The Lord doesn’t play pretend games with our salvation. He doesn’t juggle the books. He doesn’t set down to anyone’s account what actually belongs to another. He gives us credit for what we actually possess, obedient faith. By means of this and on the basis of the sacrifice of His Son on the cross, He forgives our sins. Thus we are really, actually justified, completely righteous. “As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:12). **The obedience of faith of the believer is imputed to the believer for his justification.**

(Some of the introductory material is taken from my introduction to the book **The Christian and Sin**. The main body of the article is my affirmative on “imputation” in my written debate with Reformed Presbyterian David N. Landon. Our fourteen written debates are published in **Calvinism on Trial**. Both of these books are publications of Faith& Facts and are available through their book store.)

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