

# February 2020

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

PHILIPPIANS  
**4:8**

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).

Two deaths have occurred this month that brought me sorrow. Sister Canita Hall, wife of Sewell Hall, passed away. She and her husband were very dear to my wife, our daughter Michelle, and me. We visited in their home in Manhattan, New York, and they visited with us in Northern New York State. They were a great encouragement. Brother Ezekiel A. Akinyemi of Ibadan, Nigeria just passed away. He visited in my home in Grenada, Mississippi in 1991, and I visited in his home in Ibadan repeatedly. He was in charge of the preacher training at the Challenge Road Church of Christ for many years and was a staunch defender of the faith against the onslaught of liberalism. I hope to meet them on the other shore.

## Timothy Massawe

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

"Cast your bread upon the waters, For you will find it after many days" (Ecclesiastes 11:1). Timothy Massawe is a young Christian and lawyer in Moshi, Tanzania, East Africa, who, through our website, [www.christistheway.com](http://www.christistheway.com), contacted us in February, 2007, and asked to receive the Bible correspondence course. He never returned the first lesson, but he continued studying on the web site, reading "Meditate on These Things," and corresponding with me by email. He kept asking me to come to Tanzania.

Since last summer was my last trip to Africa, I finally agreed to go to Tanzania and visit him. Don McClain, Pam Lawrence, my daughter Michelle Sharp, and I stayed in the Massawe home in Moshi, Tanzania last July and taught Bible classes for the Kilimanjaro Church of Christ. Because of the teaching we had sent over the last twelve years, this entire congregation left the American missionaries and took a stand for "congregational autonomy" (1 Peter 5:1-2) in opposition to their outside domination.

Brother Massawe taught another Tanzanian congregation the truth on this issue, and they have also

taken a stand for the truth.

With his legal training he is helping Tanzanian congregations register with the government as autonomous congregations, rather than being a part of TZ 2,000, a missionary society set up by the American missionaries which controls Tanzanian churches of Christ.

*“And He said, ‘The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come’” (Mark 4:26-29).*

Let’s keep on scattering the seed and leave the harvest to the Lord. “So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:7).

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## **One Candlepower**

Jefferson David Tant | Roswell, Georgia, USA

Did you ever notice what happens when you light a candle? When does the flame give the most light - at the beginning when it is lit, or when the candle is half gone? When? Silly question, isn't it? Everyone knows that as soon as a candle is lit it begins to shine with all of its "one candlepower."

Did you ever notice what happens to some who obey the gospel of Christ? After the first “flash” of light, they grow dim, and some even go out. While we acknowledge the fact that babes in Christ have to be taught, nurtured and encouraged, it should also be recognized that even the new convert is included in the words of Christ:

*“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16).*

One cannot be excused for having a “dim” light or none at all simply because he is young in the faith. From the moment of his new birth, the child of God is to be a living testimonial unto the glory of God, having put off the old man with all his worldly ways, he is to manifest the “new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him...” (Colossians 3:10).

The only reason I can think of that would prevent the new-born from seeking to do everything in his knowledge to serve Christ is this—a lack of repentance. If one has truly repented in his obedience to the gospel, there is no need for Christians to “ride herd” on him to keep him in the way of Christ. Repentance is a turning, an “about face,” and solves all sorts of problems even before they arise! While the need to admonish and encourage will be present, the need to “ride herd,” to keep after one constantly, indicates something is seriously wrong.

Perhaps we need to stress repentance, as well as baptism, when we are presenting the gospel to the lost.

What about your light? Do others constantly have to fan the air to help your light burn? Are they using match after match trying to rekindle that flame? How much light are you giving to the world?

Let every one of us determine that our “one candlepower” will be the brightest it can possibly be. The brighter the light, the more the darkness is dispelled, resulting in greater opportunities to lead others to Christ and salvation through the light we supplied.

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## **How Much Is Your Soul Worth?**

"Give one Dollar to save one soul in Africa." This was the title of an article written by American Missionary working in Africa. I came across the article two years ago when I was visiting North America. The purpose of the article was to persuade some congregations in America to support the Missionary work in Africa. If less was to be given, fewer souls would have been saved, if more was given, then more souls would have been saved.

The article won attention of many especially those with soul saving spirit. But when I finished reading the article, many questions came to my mind. I began to dig into the scriptural accuracy of the article, literal application of the story, and consequences it might cause to many, including nonbelievers.

Why establish such a weird salvation rule in Africa? If the article is not challenged, it is very likely to cause the majority to believe that paying for indulgence that Martin Luther refused in Roman Catholic Church still exists in the Lord's Church today.

The differences that exist between the Catholic indulgence and "give one dollar to save one soul in Africa theme" is that in Catholicism a sinner pays for his own sins but with regard to the article, a Christian Supporter can pay for another non-Christian to be saved.

In Catholicism, we don't know the exact cost to pay for an indulgence but the writer of the article has the budget for saving souls in Africa, which is \$ 1 per person. I have no idea how he arrived at this budget.

The current population in Tanzania is approximately 50 million people. According to the gospel fundraising article, it requires \$ 50 million dollars to convert the entire country of multiple religions including Muslims.

If the article writer could raise up to \$50 million, the outcome would surprise the whole world. Tanzania would be the first country to eliminate the Muslim religion peacefully through the gospel. Another consequence is that the work of evangelism in Tanzania would be useless or even cease for centuries because everybody would already be a Christian.

Now there is specific cost for saving one soul in a marginalized society; how much would it cost to save one soul in first world countries? If that strategy was even 30% successful, the government of the United States and other western countries would fund that project to convert Muslim extremists to Christianity to eradicate terrorism. Hosea 4:6 states, "My people perish from lack of knowledge."

There has never been a specific charge for converting an individual person to Christ. If the apostle Paul raised funds from brethren in the first century according to the number of people he had to convert, how much money do you think Paul would have collected?

I have labored for years in my devoted personal evangelism, and I was only able to convert a few friends who are still faithful to Christ. It is ironic that the efforts I made and the time I spent studying the Bible with those friends could be substituted with a single dollar per person. How much is your soul worth to yourself?

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36) Note that when Jesus considers the value of one soul, he takes the ratio of the whole world and the conclusion he makes implies that even the materials of the entire world cannot evaluate the real value of your soul.

How much is your soul worth to God? "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). All souls are equal before God, and the price for their salvation is inevitably the blood of Jesus Christ.

The blood of our lord Jesus is priceless. Its value can never be determined. To establish that one dollar

can save one soul is to devalue the blood of Jesus Christ. Our duty is not to auction salvation but to preach it. Everyone can be a recipient of the gospel and once saved can continue to enjoy the benefits of salvation, if he remains faithful.

I am not against raising funds to support the work of evangelism, but Christians should avoid using strategies and words while raising support for themselves that confuse and mislead others about the plan for salvation.

Today, with articles like this, it is becoming even more difficult for the world to distinguish between a Coca Cola salesman attracting customers and servant of God looking for funds to fulfill the great commission in Matthew 28:16-20.

We can facilitate the work of evangelism by paying a preacher in another locality, but we cannot afford a specific cost for bringing an individual person to Christ. If Jesus was to sell his blood to mankind, who could afford the price for it? The entire earth with silver and gold could not recover the cost for one person let alone the whole world that he died for.

The Bible has established procedures for salvation including the cost of discipleship that requires one to deny himself and follow Christ (Matthew 16:24). Let us preach the word that is able to cut the hearts of men so they can make the hard choice to deny themselves and follow Christ.

Jesus said to Thomas, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). He also said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

I am not in the Tribunal of Consciousness to judge the intention of the Missionary who wrote the article but literally, one dollar cannot save a soul.

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## **"Walk In Newness Of Life"**

Jim Mickells | Lewisburg, Tennessee, USA

It amazes me how many people deny that baptism has any connection with salvation. In a recent conversation I had, they very plainly stated they had been saved before being baptized. "One should be baptized," they said, "because Jesus was." Their contention was that it had nothing to do with the forgiveness of sins.

Peter said, "There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21). Was Peter telling the truth? Can you trust his words? Where those words inspired by God? The correct answer to each of these questions would be yes. Baptism does save us. Yet not baptism alone.

Paul made this statement when writing to those at Rome:

*"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin" (Romans 6:3-6).*

If one was saved before being baptized, the apostle's analogy about the death, burial, and resurrection in these verses would not be valid. Who is the person to be buried in the watery grave of baptism? It is the old man of sin (verse 6). If one is saved at the point of faith, the person buried is the one who has been

made alive. Do you bury a person who is alive or one who is dead? Surely one would not contend we bury people who are alive.

Paul's contention in verse 4 is that just as Christ was raised from the dead, those who have been buried in the waters of baptism will rise as well. He further states they would rise to walk in newness of life. This new life is experienced when one comes forth from the grave. The old man of sin has been crucified. The person saved has died to sin and is now set free (verse 7). If one is saved at the point of faith, he would have already been walking in newness of life.

In verse 3, the writer says that we are baptized into the death of Christ. What does he mean by this statement? Look what happened in the death of Christ. In the gospel of John, it says, "But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out" (John 19:33-34). His blood was shed in His death. It is when one is baptized into the death of Christ he receives the benefit of the blood shed by our Savior. The blood has been applied. If one is saved at the point of faith, then he is saved without applying the blood of Christ.

Jesus, when He gave the great commission to His apostles, said, "And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16). Peter's sermon recorded by Luke on Pentecost was very similar, "Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). If I am to be saved by God's grace, having my sins remitted, then I must be baptized.

Baptism does not nullify the grace of God; it is how through faith we receive the benefits provided by Him (Romans 5:1-2). How could these inspired men of God make these verses any easier to understand? They seem pretty simple to me. Why not just do what the Lord says? No matter the great effort to explain these verses away by some, they will still face them in judgment.

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## Confessing Public Sin

Mike Thomas | Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA

Sometimes we as Christians can have the wrong attitude in acknowledging our mistakes, especially when they become public knowledge. "Why should I confess my sins to the congregation? It's nobody's business what I have done; this is a matter between me and God. I shouldn't have to include others in my forgiveness!"

There are several valid reasons for confessing our public sins:

**God commands it.** The Bible mentions two aspects of confession that must be met when we have sinned as Christians. The first is our responsibility to God. "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). The second has to do with our responsibility to other people, when our sins are known to others. "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16). These are not the only requirements to meet in the aftermath of sin; the New Testament also tells Christians to repent. "Repent therefore of this your wickedness and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. (Acts 8:22). However, confession is a very important part of the forgiveness process and must not be overlooked. "Has the erring sinner learned his lesson? Does he realize the seriousness of his sin? Has he repented?" These types of questions are answered in a genuine, public confession.

**To restore relationship with brethren.** Our sins not only affect our relationship with God but also impair our relationship with other Christians, especially those of the same local church. They too can be harmed

and discouraged by our inappropriate behavior. Paul acknowledged this fact when he referred to the erring saint in Corinth who had “caused grief” to the church with his rebellion (2 Corinthians 2:5). This is true any time a Christian’s sins become known. It creates a ripple effect of shock and disappointment throughout the congregation—because of the love and confidence they placed in him. Fortunately, a genuine confession helps restore that relationship and begins the reconciliation process. Paul said of that same sinner at Corinth, “This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore, I urge you to reaffirm your love to him” (verses 6-8). None of that would have been possible had the erring not acknowledged his wrongdoing. He had to signify in some way that the brethren were right for correcting his sin (cf. Matthew 18:15-17) and that he was no longer living that way. A genuine confession accomplishes that task.

**Shows personal accountability.** David wrote, “For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned...” (Psalm 51:3-4). Every sinner who is genuinely sorry for his actions will have the same response, which is likely the main reason why God wants us to confess our sins. It is not a time to blame others for our wrong choices or to attribute our ungodliness to the circumstances. God will not accept our excuses. Instead, He wants us to have enough integrity to admit our failure, accept the consequences, and vow to never repeat it. Thus, “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13).

As painful as it is to make a public confession, we must be mature and honest enough to do so if we are to be reconciled to God. There is no way around it, especially when our sins may influence others. Nevertheless, the Lord is rich in mercy and promises to forgive us when we are ready to commit to holiness. So, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up” (James 4:10). We will both save our self from our wicked behavior and discourage others from mimicking our wrong choices.

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## I Don't Keep Any Of The Ten Commandments

William J. Stewart | Odessa, Ontario, Canada

When speaking with folks about the distinction between the Old and New Testaments, I will, to make a vivid point, often declare, "I don't keep any of the Ten Commandments." You ought to see the look such a statement elicits on the face of some people. Now, what do I mean by that statement? I acknowledge the God of heaven and worship Him alone. I do not serve false gods. I do not misuse the name of God. I worship on the day which God has prescribed. I render the appropriate respect to my parents. I do not murder. I do not commit fornication. I do not steal. I do not lie. I do not covet other people's goods. And yet, I earnestly say, "I don't keep any of the Ten Commandments."

The Ten Commandments (and indeed, the whole Law of Moses) were not given for me to keep, but for the people of Israel (Deuteronomy 4:44-45; 5:1-3). As we consider the testimony of Scripture, it ought to become evident that we are not under the Law of Christ, not the Law of Moses. Consider:

### **MATTHEW 5:17-18**

*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*

Many will use this text to affirm that the Law would never cease, but the careful Bible student will realize that Jesus is saying just the opposite. In verse 17, the Lord states unequivocally that He came to fulfill the Law. In the next verse, He plainly indicates what would take place once it was fulfilled - it would pass away.

A parent may tell a child not to get off a chair until his "time out" is over. A union leader may tell management that the workers will not return until all their demands are met. There are countless

statements where a given result will occur once a condition has been met. Shall we leave the child on the chair even after the "time out" is completed? Shall the workers forsake their jobs even after their demands have been satisfied? Of course not. Neither should we affirm the perpetuation of the Law, for the Lord has fulfilled it.

### **ACTS 15:1, 5**

*Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved. ... It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.*

These two statements were made by some first century Jewish Christians with regard to the Gentile converts to Christ. They, like some today, were proponents of the Law, and sought to bind it upon believers. Notice what the apostles had to say of them and their position:

- Peter asked, "...why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither you nor your fathers were able to bear?" (15:10)
- James, considering the coming of the Gentiles to Christ, in view of prophecy, stated, "...we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God..." (15:19)
- The apostles distinguished themselves from the Law proponents, declaring, "...we gave no such commandment..." (15:24)
- The apostles, inspired of God, wrote to the Gentiles, saying, "...it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality." (15:28-29)

Those who affirm that we are still subject to the Law of Moses today set themselves against the apostles of Christ and the Holy Spirit himself.

### **GALATIANS 3:23-26**

*But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

Paul revealed the purpose of the Law of Moses. It guarded the hearts of the Jews until faith came. Not personal faith, for personal faith has existed since creation began. The faith spoke of is the law of faith, which would be revealed in Christ. But notice, when the faith came (ie. the New Testament Law, the Gospel), then "...we are no longer under a tutor." The purpose of the law had been served. Now, we are God's people, not by the Law of Moses, but "...through faith in Christ Jesus." (NOTE, it was only the Jews who had been kept under guard by the law, the Gentiles were never under the law)

### **HEBREWS 8:7-13**

*For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says, 'Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah - not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the days when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.' In that He says, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.*

Two covenants are under consideration here, the first being established through Moses, the second, through the Christ. In bringing forth a new covenant, what did God plan for the former? Was it to remain, and be kept in conjunction with the second? The Hebrew writer uses words such as "obsolete," "growing

old," and "ready to vanish away" to describe the Law of Moses. We are not subject to the covenant established by God with Israel at Mount Sinai. We are subject to the law established with the entire world through the Christ at Calvary.

#### **GALATIANS 5:1-4**

*Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Indeed, I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.*

Those who contend that we are still subject to Moses' law today fail to be consistent with their own claim. Paul indicated that if one presumes to keep part of the law, they are indebted to keep the whole law (v 3). Do those who claim to keep the law today continue in the sacrifices prescribed? Do they observe the feasts in the way they are commanded? Do they hold to the penalties instructed for crimes and offences under Moses' law? Some who claim we should keep Moses' Law even fail to keep the Sabbath day as instructed in the Law. Their claim fails support through their actions.

In Galatians 5, Paul wrote to Gentile Christians whom Judaizing teachers pressured to receive circumcision in obedience to the Law of Moses (the same issue which existed in Acts 15), Paul's message was clear - don't do it! You have been made free in Christ, why would you turn to a law of bondage (cf. Galatians 2:4)? To seek to be justified by Moses' law is to separate oneself from Christ.

#### **COLOSSIANS 2:14-17**

*...having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.*

What was the handwriting of requirements that was against and contrary to us? It is the law of Moses. Recall Peter's statement in Acts 15 - the law was a yoke "...which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." It was "taken out of the way ... nailed to the cross." The Law of Moses had "become obsolete" and was "ready to vanish away" (Hebrews 8). That being the case, Paul urged the disciples not to allow people to judge them in matters related to the Law - food, drink, festivals, new moons, sabbaths. The disciples of Christ are not subject to these laws or any laws from Moses. He identifies the Law as a shadow - the reality, the true, is found in Christ and His law, the gospel.

Well, hang on. I said earlier that I acknowledge the one true God, worship Him alone, I don't misuse His name and I worship on the day He prescribed. I have respect for my parents, I do not murder, commit fornication, steal, lie or covet my neighbour's goods. By definition, am I not keeping the Ten Commandments? Nope, not a one. All of the commandments (except the Sabbath law) are repeated in the New Testament (Matthew 4:10; 1 Corinthians 10:14; 1 Timothy 6:1; Colossians 3:20; Romans 13:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Ephesians 4:28; Colossians 3:9; Hebrews 13:5). The Sabbath is not repeated, for the prescribed day of worship in the New Testament is the first day of the week (Matthew 28:1-2; John 20:19; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2).

Friend, we are not subject to Moses' law. It was not and is not our law, not even the Ten Commandments. We are subject to Christ, to the message of the gospel as revealed through the New Testament.

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## **"Study to Shew Thyself Approved unto God"**

Sunday Adetunji | Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria

"Our beloved brother Paul" (2 Peter 3:15), in his second epistle to his "own son in the faith" (1 Timothy



1:2), enjoined him in chapter 2:15 as follows: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

In the above passage, one can see certain specific parts of this imperative that are non-negotiable; they are: (1) "Study to shew thyself approved unto God", (2) "a workman that needed not to be ashamed", (3) "rightly dividing the word of truth." they are non-negotiable in that, he must do just what the imperative demands!

Similarly, one can easily note that Timothy was only told 'what' to do and 'why' he should do it in that Bible passage; but 'where' and 'when' he should do it were not stated. And the 'how' of his study can only be inferred from other scriptures (1 Corinthians 9:21; 2 Timothy 3:14-16; etc.). In the areas of 'where' and 'when' to study, he might use his liberty (Galatians 5:1). It is in this area of freedom, therefore, that I want to address to serve as a guide unto us, while an individual will be left to decide on his own where and when he will obey the Lord in this wise, within the available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 4 weeks a month, that he has to himself, all things being equal (James 4:14-15), as he must be mindful, too, of his other assignments, that is, to do the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:5), and his preps for putting things in order....(Titus 1:5) in the church. But on the 'how' of his study, "the servant of the Lord" (2 Timothy 2:24) isn't that free when some other scriptures are considered as we shall see later in our discussion.

**Where Will The Evangelist Do His Study?** There are no hard and fast rules concerning a place where he can do his studies. He may do it in his "own" residence, in any school premises that he may have the permission to use, or, in the church's meeting place, etc. His major consideration here should be conducive environment for studies, which, at times, may be a prison custody; as was the case with Paul when he ordered Timothy to bring to him "...the books" (2 Timothy 4:9-13; cf. Acts 28:30,31). Note: Some Psychology of Education literatures may be of help.

**When Will The Evangelist Do His Study?** He is at liberty here to decide the time of the day he will do his studies. The thing is that he must "use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh" (Galatians 5:13; cf. Romans 6:22; 1 Peter 2:16). The time of the day he will do his studies may be determined by whether he is a full-time or part-time preacher. If it is on a full-time basis that he is engaged by the church, it means that his job is to study, prepare lessons for his teaching programs, evangelize, pray, etc. (1 Thessalonians 5:17; 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Peter 3:15b; 2 Timothy 4:2, 5; cf. Acts 6:4). And this does not mean that he has no relaxation or rest period ( Mark 6:31).

**Again, his health, age** ( this is embeded in what some Psychology of Education text called "readiness and maturation" under Learner's Factor In Learning), presence or absence of noise, other facilities, etc. may dictate when he will do his studies. If, on the other hand, he is a part-time preacher, who must have to still tent-make (i.e., do other godly work(s)) in order to augment his income, we know he will necessarily have to divide his time for the two endeavors – preaching and his other works. And his tent-making activities, without gainsaying, will definitely influence his schedule for studies. And whatever the negotiation or arrangement between the church and the evangelist on the terms and conditions on which the minister's service is required, the congregation should honor such negotiation so as to enable him plan his time for studies, etc.

I want to conclude this division by asserting: "Allow him to study. Since it is his duty to study, the members should not interrupt him- disturb him with minor matters." –Claude A. Guild, **Training Men To Preach and Serve**.<sup>126</sup> Without mincing words, Jethro's ideology or advice may be of help here (Exodus 18:14-20).

**How Will The Evangelist Study?** The how of his study may be approached in the following ways when considering 1 Corinthians 9:21, "To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,)...." "Law" in this context means the Old Testament; "the law to Christ" must refer to the totality of Christ's will, which, no doubt, are contained in the New Testament. Other

passages with the sentiments of both Old and New Testaments may hint him on the direction to go. Therefore, the evangelist must prepare to do the following:

- He should study to identify the division of the Bible, that is, the Old Testament and New Testament (Hebrews 8:13; Cp. Jeremiah 31:31).
- He should study to know the three different eras of the Bible, that is, the patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian eras.
- He should study to know that the Old Testament, depending on the context, is regarded as the law: i. e.g., John 10:34, "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" whereas the law Jesus referred to here is Psalm 82 verse 6; ii. Mat. 12:5, "Or have ye nor read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?" whereas what Christ was referring to is in the book of Numbers 28:9-10; iii. John 12:34, "The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever...." Whereas the people were citing Micah 4:7; iv. 1 Corinthians 14:34, where Paul said to the Corinthian church, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto the to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law." Which law was he referring to? He was referring to a portion of the first book of the Pentateuch, or the Law, that is, Genesis 3:16.
- He should study to know how to establish Biblical authority, viz: direct command, approved example, and the necessary inference. To comprehend what is meant here, listen to Roy E. Cogdill: "These three methods of receiving divine authority illustrated by the Lord's Supper:

**Precept.** Its observance. "This do in remembrance of me." I Corinthians 11:25.

- Paul received it of the Lord and gave it to the church by His authority. Matthew 28:20 – "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (1 Corinthians 11:23).

**Approved Example.** The time of its observance. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread" (Acts 20:7).

- Paul had received this memorial institution from the Lord and knew therefore when the Lord wanted it to be observed.
- He remained in Troas for seven days- obviously waiting for the day upon which the saints assembled (Acts 20:6).
- This evidences that the Lord's Supper was observed in the church of the New Testament days only upon the first day of the week – the Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10).

**Necessary Inference.** The frequency of its observance. "The first day of the week to break bread."

Compare:

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8).

"The first day of the week to break bread." Acts 20:7.

Note: If the "sabbath day to keep it holy" means every sabbath - as regularly as it comes - then, "The first day of the week to break bread" means every "first day," as regularly as it comes. This is the "unavoidable implication of the clear import and meaning of the language used." There is no other way of determining how often this memorial supper is to be observed. (**Walking By Faith**, 14-15).

- The "how" of study of the evangelist cum other Christians is to admit that God's silence on any matter isn't a permission to act (Deut. 29:29; Cp. Num 9:8; 15:34).
- He should study prayerfully for wisdom, knowledge and understanding cum the grace to do the will of God.
- Other guidelines that will in no mean way aid the "how" of the evangelist's study are:
  - What? that is, what is communicated?
  - Who? that is, the communicator?
  - Why? that is, the purpose of communication?
  - When? that is, the time and date of communication?
  - Where? that is, the place of communication?
  - Whom? that is, the recipient or decoder of the message communicated?

## Conclusion

The instruction to the evangelist to study is in no way a trifle if placed side by side his other duties as a minister of God. In fact, I am persuaded to say that study is the gate to conviction, doing and teaching. For one can only do and teach his conviction! (Ezra 7:10. )

May the Almighty God help us (preachers, members and the congregations of the Lord's church) to be able to attach necessary importance to this great aspect of the Christian life. Amen.

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## Jealousies

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

*Now the words of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21).*

Good News: Attendance was at an all time high the last two Sundays. Bad News: The preacher was on vacation. (That's a joke, folks!)

That's like the word translated "jealousies" (**NKJV**) in Galatians 5:20. In this context it's a "work of the flesh" (verse 19), and those who practice it "will not inherit the kingdom of God" (verse 21). But in John 2:17 it is translated "zeal," and, in fulfillment of prophecy (Psalm 69:9), is a characteristic of Jesus Christ we are to follow (cf. 2 Corinthians 9:2). Let's consider the good news/bad news of this character trait.

The primary meaning of the word is "excitement of mind, ardor, fervor of spirit" (Thayer. 271). When used in the good sense it means "ardor in embracing, pursuing, defending anything" (Ibid.). In the bad sense it entails "the kind of zeal which does not try to help others but rather to harm them, the predominant concern being for personal advancement" (**TDNT**. 2:381-2). Thus, it is translated "jealousies" (**NKJV**) or simply "jealousy" (**NASB, ESV**).

Jealousy comes from selfish personal ambition (James 3:14). King Saul was jealous of David when the women of Israel gave him greater praise than they did for Saul (1 Samuel 18:6-9). The party spirit, which springs from ambition, is manifested in jealousy (Acts 5:17; 13:45; 1 Corinthians 1:11-13).

Jealousy expresses itself in the desire to hurt others of whom we are jealous. King Saul tried to kill David (1 Samuel 18:10-11). The Jewish council persecuted the apostles because of jealousy (Acts 5:17-18), and later the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia harassed Paul for the same reason (Acts 13:45). Jealousy leads to "disorder and every vile practice" (James 3:16, **ESV**). It causes strife among brethren (1 Corinthians 3:3) and is associated with "quarreling, ... anger, hostility, slander, gossip" (2 Corinthians 12:20, **ESV**).

The antidote for sinful jealousy is love. "Love is kind and is not jealous" (1 Corinthians 13:4, **NASB**). If your child excels more than you did in sports, are you jealous or happy? Why? What if your brother or sister in Christ receives an honor you did not? Love will lead us to be zealous for the welfare of others rather than jealous of their success (Colossians 4:12-13). Rather than being jealous of the accomplishments of our brothers and sisters, we should emulate (same Greek word, **KJV**) what they did to achieve the success (Hebrews 13:7).

We must be zealous for good (Galatians 4:18) but never jealous of others. "Let us behave properly as in the day, ... not in strife and jealousy" (Romans 13:13).

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## **The Destiny of Man**

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### **Introduction**

September 11, 2001, the world watched in horror as terrorists took the lives of almost 3000 people. Thousands of people like us, who hours earlier were beginning a normal work day with no hint of significant danger, were suddenly face to face with their eternal destinies. For many souls who moments earlier were absorbed with job, family, and pleasure, now only one thing mattered - were they right with God? Surely this should cause us to think. Our lives too, in any of a thousand different ways, could be instantly snuffed out. Each of us must face the destiny of his soul. In comparison to this, all other concerns shrink to utter insignificance.

*For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works*  
(Matthew 16:26-27).

### **What is your destiny?**

#### **Life**

To the young, life seems endless; but both the inspired Word of God and the experience of the aged confirm that our time here is but a fleeting moment. "As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more" (Psalm 103:15-16).

Furthermore, human life is so terribly uncertain. While you anticipate many years of work and pleasure, your life could be ended in an instant, as quickly and unpredictably as the vanishing of the morning fog.

*Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit'; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that' (James 4:13-15).*

We must also realize there will be no second chance after death to make corrections for a misspent life. "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).

#### **Death**

As you consider your life, be realistic. Death is certain. "It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

The only alternative is the possibility the Lord may return while we are still alive.

*Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).*

Spend your small amount of time here preparing for destiny.

#### **After Death**

After death, what then? The spirits of all the dead enter a realm known in the Hebrew tongue as "Sheol" and in the Greek as "Hades." David prophesied the resurrection of Christ thus: "For **you will not leave my soul in hades**, nor will you allow your holy one to see corruption" (cf. Acts 2:27). Thus, the apostle Peter explained, "He, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that **His soul was not left in Hades**, nor did His flesh see corruption (Acts 2:31). This realm is variously defined as "the common receptacle of disembodied spirits," "the unseen world," or simply "the abode of the dead."

There are two places within this realm. One is "Paradise," where the blessed dead are comforted. As the Lord promised the thief, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). The other realm is "torments" where the lost departed spirits suffer. The Master said the rich man was "in torments in Hades" (Luke 16:23). These places are separated by a "great gulf" over which none can cross. When the rich man wanted Abraham to send Lazarus to comfort him, Abraham reminded him, "between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us (Luke 16:26).

### **Judgment Day**

Then follows our unbreakable appointment with the Day of days. There have been many great days in human history. Americans remember Independence Day, July 4, 1776. Now September 11, 2001 has exceeded December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor Day, as "a day that will live in infamy." But there is coming a day, "the judgment of the great day," (Jude verse 6) which shall completely exceed all other days of all time.

On that monumental day, all the people, both good and bad, of all ages shall come forth from the grave. Christ warned:

*Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:28-29)!*

Abraham and Sarah shall arise from Machpelah. Moses shall come forth from the unknown wilderness grave across from Beth Peor. The oceans shall deliver up the countless millions buried within. The righteous dead shall burst forth from the grave with the shout of victory. All, all from Adam down, shall be raised! All the peoples of all the nations of the earth, including you, my friend, will stand before the Lord to be judged.

*When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left (Matthew 25:31-33).*

### **The Judgment**

Christ will be the Judge. "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22).

His Word will be the standard of judgment. "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). Reject His tender plea now if you will, but by that same Gospel your destiny will be sealed.

### **Eternity**

On that day time will end and future eternity will begin. "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:46).

Eternity - what does it mean? Actually, in human terms it is undefinable because it is infinite (unlimited), whereas all within our experience is finite (limited). But, to crudely illustrate its vast sweep, suppose that a tiny house fly were to scrape a minute particle of dust up on one of his little wings and begin the 92,900,000 mile journey to the sun at the rate of one mile per hour, deposit the particle, return to the earth

at the same slow pace, and continue this process until the entirety of our globe, all six sextillion (6 followed by 27 zeros) tons of it, were transported to the sun. How would this compare with eternity? About like the snap of your finger compares to all human history from Adam to the present. And the comparison is inadequate, because, despite the enormity of the time involved, it is finite, not infinite.

### **Hell**

If you have not prepared for destiny, you will spend that eternity in a horrible devil's hell. "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

The punishment will be terrible beyond human power to describe. Those miserable wretches so utterly condemned will burn without ceasing, with never any hope of relief. "And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night" (Revelation 14:11). There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 25:30). Their companions forever will be the wicked of the earth.

*But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death* (Revelation 21:8).

"But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie" (Revelation 22:15). Man's vicious adversary, Satan, and his angels will be their companions. "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels'" (Matthew 25:41).

### **Heaven**

On the other hand, if you have prepared to meet your destiny, the beauty of an eternal inheritance in Heaven will await you.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time* (1 Peter 1:3-5).

What joy to spend eternity in that sweet home where we shall never again face the suffering of disease, the heartache of death, or the tears of departure. The loving Father shall tenderly comfort His children forever and ever. "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

He shall be our light throughout endless ages, and the curse of sin will be forever lifted. "There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever" (Revelation 22:5).

How blessed to be in the very presence of God, His Son, our beloved Savior, and the Holy Spirit. "God Himself will be with them and be their God" (Revelation 21:3). "And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him (Revelation 22:3; cf. 1 Peter 1:12). The angels of God will be our companions, for they too are "in heaven" (Matthew 22:30). How delightful to walk and talk with Abraham, Moses, Ruth, Esther, Mary, Paul, Peter, and all the great men and women of faith from every age. Don't you long to go there?

### **Conclusion**

Eternity is the common destiny of Adam's race. Where you spend that eternity is your decision. It depends on what you do with Christ and His Word. You can believe in Him, obey Him, and give your life to Him, and your eternal destiny will be the wonderful joy of heaven. Or you can refuse Him and His Word and suffer forever in hell. Where will you spend eternity?



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