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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.

Question from Kenya about Number Baptized in Acts 2:41

Question

Where were the 3000 souls in Acts 2:41 baptized? These were in Jerusalem, but they came from Jerusalem to river Jordan to be baptized and that trip was a day's long journey. Yet it is like some few hours of Peter's speech and the writer indicates that they were baptized upon that same hour.

Answer

I am answering your question by quoting from The Original Commentary on Acts by J.W. McGarvey published in 1863. His observations on the amount of water available in Jerusalem would not apply to today, but the facts about the first century are still true.

"Times without number the objection has been urged, and as often refuted, that three thousand men could not have been immersed in so short a time, and with the inadequate supply of water afforded in Jerusalem. As to the quantity of available water, Dr. J. T. Barclay, in his work entitled "The City of the Great King," written during a residence of three years and a half in Jerusalem, as a missionary, shows that Jerusalem was anciently better supplied with water than any other city known to history not permeated by living streams. Even to the present day, though most of the public reservoirs are now dry, such as the supposed pool of Bethesda, 365 feet long by 131 in breadth, and the lower pool of Gihon, 600 feet long by 260 in breadth, there are still in existence bodies of water, such as the pool of Siloam, and the pool of Hezekiah, affording most ample facilities for immersing any number of persons.

"As to the want of time for the immersion of so many, any one who will make the mathematical calculation, without which it is folly to offer the objection, will find that there was the greatest abundance of time. Allowing that Peter's speech commenced at nine o'clock, as he himself states in verse 15, and that the exercises at the temple closed at noon, we have left six hours till sunset. To immerse sixty men in an hour would be very deliberate work for one administrator. But there were twelve administrators, hence, each hour there were not less than seven hundred and twenty persons immersed. At this rate, in less than four and one-fourth hours the whole multitude would be immersed, leaving the sun nearly two hours high when the last candidate emerged from the water. In view of this simple calculation, which a child could make, it is truly astonishing that so many grave critics and preachers should urge this objection. It strikingly illustrates the blinding effects of partisan zeal" (J.W. McGarvey, Original Commentary on Acts. 45-46).

"In John 5, the fourth evangelist describes the pool north of the temple's sheep gate in Jerusalem. John 5:2 says:

'Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes.'

"For about all of the history of the church (up until about 100 years ago), John 5 was the only witness to this pool. It was not in Josephus, or other historians of the area. This led many people to believe that the pool was allegorical and that John was a much later Greek author and the gospel could be dated to the late second century (e.g. 150 - 175AD). These scholars thought that John fabricated the pool as a metaphor.

"Then archaeologists found the pool right where John says it was"

(<https://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/47850/john-5-pool-of-bethesda-five-or-seven-porticoes>)

That's Called "Commitment"

Jefferson David Tant | Hendersonville, Tennessee, USA

Mariela Seyla Mariela Aguirre Guevara lives in Nicaragua, and her story is truly inspiring. As a young child she lived with her mother and grandparents, and had a passion to study. From preschool through sixth grade, she would walk with her mother more than two hours to get to school and then two hours back home. She was happy to do it. She excelled. After sixth grade, she had to work in the fields, growing coffee and milking cows, as there were no higher grades anywhere near.

At church one Sunday, she heard of a group called Mission Lazarus that offered an opportunity to learn a trade. Mariela was happy to walk three hours up the La Botija Mountain, and three hours back (often in the rain) to get her training. She did her homework by the light of an oil lantern. One day she was attacked by a wild animal and had to spend some time in the hospital for an injured leg. Poverty and crime were a part of the world she lived in.

One of her teachers offered to take Mariela into her home so she could continue to get her education without the dangerous walk. That was only an hour away, and she continued her studies. She also had a part-time job to help pay for her education expenses.

In January 2021 she enrolled at the University of North Nicaragua for an education in Law. On Friday she left her home at 3 a.m. for a four-hour walk to the highway to catch a bus to town. She spent the night there on Saturday so she could catch a bus to Nicaragua's border where she got on another bus to take her to the university. Other days, she and her mother worked at the Mission Lazarus coffee farm to help pay for her education.

Now, do you understand why I entitled this article "That's Called 'Commitment'"? What an amazing story about an amazing young woman.

The dictionary defines "commitment" as "feeling dedication and loyalty to a cause, activity, or job; wholeheartedly dedicated." And Paul uses the word to describe the Roman Christians to whom he was writing:

"But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18).

Now to the application. How would you describe your life as a Christian? Well, before we go there, let's look at an obvious example of commitment in the First Century. His name was Paul.

"Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure" (2 Corinthians 11:23-27).

We have so much to be thankful for in our nation. We don't have to endure the hardships that Mariela faced. We don't have to deal with the persecution that Paul endured. In a sense, we may say that we are "at ease in Zion." And what do we do with our freedom and ease? One may say, "Oh, I don't commit sexual sins, and I don't steal, and I don't do this, that, or the other, and I go to church three times a week." Is that all there is to it? Is that the sum and total of "commitment?" Is there nothing else?

Let's see. Suppose you became acquainted with a philanthropist. This man was a multi-millionaire who had a good heart. He had so much money that he didn't know how to count it. So he told you one day:

"I have so much money, and I can never use it all. I want you to approach your friends, neighbors, fellow-workers and even strangers and offer them the free sum of \$100,000 if they will sign an oath that they will only use the money for good purposes."

Question 1: Would you keep your own treasure, but fail to mention the offer to others? I suspect I know the answer.

Question 2: What is the greatest gift you have ever received? Would it not be the gift of eternal life and freedom from the fear of eternal hell and fire? Who can deny that?

Question 3: What effort are you putting into sharing this great treasure with those that are destined to spend eternity in the fires of hell? What commitment have you made to this great goal? When we consider the almost unimaginable commitment Mariela had in reaching her goal, what kind of commitment have we made to achieving the goal that Christ set before us?

And what is that goal? Of course, it is heaven. Now consider the goal that Christ has set before us. It is contained in The Great Commission:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Please take note of the fact that Christ told the apostles to make disciples, baptize them, and then teach

the disciples what he told the apostles to do—"make disciples..." In other words, we as disciples of Christ are "commissioned" to share our faith with the lost. This is a commission given to every Christian, and it is not directed just to preachers. Too often we seem to have the notion that this is the preacher's job. Well, if the preacher is a disciple of Christ, then he has the same commission as the twelve did, **but so do we!**

Question – Are you and I as individual Christians doing our part to fulfill Christ's commission to us? That's what commitment is, and if we had the same kind of commitment that Mariela and Paul had, what wonders could be done for the Lord's kingdom and for the salvation of souls?

Abide In That Calling

Pat Donahue | Harvest, Alabama, USA

Some Christians use 1 Corinthians 7:20 to teach sinners can stay in whatever marriage they find themselves in when they are converted, even an unscriptural marriage. After all the text does read, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called," and the context is talking about marriage.

But notice the two example callings Paul suggested those being converted stay in: verse 18 - circumcision or uncircumcision, and verse 21 - servant or free. So really Paul is not suggesting people can abide in sinful situations when they are converted. Whether one is circumcised or uncircumcised or whether someone is a servant or free is not a matter of right and wrong. What Paul is trying to illustrate with these two example callings is his inspired recommendation that (because of the "present distress") folks should stay single if they are single and stay married if they are married (26-27). Neither of those choices is sinful in and of itself.

Paul is not saying it okay to continue in sin. For example, can a Christian abide in the following callings?:

- Thief - Can a man keep on stealing? Can he keep everything he has stolen?
- Polygamist - Can a man keep on practicing polygamy? Can he keep all four of his wives?
- Homosexual - Can a man keep on practicing homosexuality? Can he keep his homosexual partner?

The obvious answers are no, right? Then why do so many think one can remain in an adulterous marriage when they are converted? Can he keep on practicing adultery? Can he keep his adulterous marriage (wife)?

Conclusion: The point of 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 then is that when one becomes a Christian, he/she is to abide in non sinful callings (single or scriptural marriage), not sinful ones. The meaning of "repent" applied to Acts 2:38 and 3:19 would tell us that.

Are You Listening?

Jim Mickells | Lewisburg, Tennessee, USA

"Oh, that My people would listen to Me, That Israel would walk in My ways!" (Psalm 81:13).

A few years ago, I was sitting on an airplane waiting for it to taxi down the runway to take off. The flight attendant began her safety instructions about the plane and what one would need to know if there was an emergency. Almost without exception all were busy talking to their neighbors. You could barely hear her speak even with a microphone. No one was interested in what she had had to say. In a very calm voice, though being ignored by most, she told us how to use our seat belts, about our oxygen mask, the escape doors on the side of the plane, and how the seat cushions could be used as a floatation device, etc. I've heard this same speech many times as I have flown, and I'm sure the majority of those on the plane that day had also heard it.

As I sat and looked around at all the passengers, seeing hardly anyone listening, it made me think about what would happen if we did have trouble during our flight. I'm sure several of those people who were not

listening would not know what to do. That same flight attendant who was telling them what to do in case of an emergency would probably have to help in some way simply because they failed to hear and heed her instructions. Those who did not hear what this lady said, if trouble did occur, would now wish they had taken the time to listen to her.

This incident on the plane reminded me of how many people in the world refuse to listen to God. He has spoken to us through His word (Hebrews 1:1-2; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Yet how many people are so involved with jobs, recreation, family, etc. they never stop and take the time to listen to what the Creator has said to them? It is easy to tell who has not heard; their knowledge of what the Scriptures teach is so limited.

The really sad truth is many who claim to be Christians are not listening. They are not growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord (2 Peter 3:18). Many cannot do what Peter tell us in 1 Peter 3:15, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." Could you find in the Bible the steps which are necessary for one to be saved and explain these verses to someone? Do you know where one is taught about the life of Christ, His church, how His people are to worship, or how to establish Bible authority, etc.?

If one is listening to the Lord, why do members not study their Bibles (2 Timothy 2:15), continually forsake the assembly of the church (Hebrews 10:24-25), not teach their children (Ephesians 6:4), fail to love their brethren and their neighbors as themselves (Matthew 22:39; 1 John 4:20), etc.? I see members, it seems to me, that are not in the least concerned with how they dress (1 Timothy 2:9-10), the places they go, the movies they watch, nor the books they read (1 Thessalonians 5:22). We could just go on and on; but are you listening to God?

There will come a day when they would wish they had listened and obeyed what the Father has said to them. All the time, effort, and every sacrifice made to know, understand, and apply to one's life will certainly have been worth it. Those who have listened and obeyed will get to hear the sweetest words which will ever enter the ears of mankind. "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord'" (Matthew 25:21). For those who have failed to listen it will be a sad day indeed, "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:23). Are you listening? "But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, And will be secure, without fear of evil" (Proverbs 1:33).

Violates God's Design for Marriage

Mike Thomas | Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA

Same-sex marriage is now a reality in the United States. Only God's judgment will fully remove it from the land (2 Peter 3:10). Until then the advocates of homosexual marriages must consider one question: Where did marriage come from? They want to rewrite the traditional arrangement to include homosexual unions, but from whom did the concept of marriage originate? The only answer is found in the Bible (Genesis 2:18)—the same book that condemns a union between same sexes. God says marriage is to be between a "male and female" (Matthew 19:4-5), with no sexual activity apart from that union (Hebrews 13:4). Those who want to redefine marriage must first get permission from its Designer to do so. But God has clearly demonstrated that He will not condone homosexuality, and says:

"Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7).

Clearly, homosexuality is not only eternally wrong, but also contradicts the natural order of life on earth. Those with these desires must learn to control them and not act on them like every other person with other weaknesses. God's people will repent of all wickedness and learn to live without returning to sin, whether it be drunkenness, adultery, theft, or homosexuality (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Homosexuality may have more

earthly consequences than other sins (because of the violations of nature), but ultimately, we are all worthless sinners in need of mercy and forgiveness. The solution is Jesus Christ and the hope He gives us. Let us do what the Corinthians did by obeying the gospel (Acts 18:8) and trusting in God's mercy. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

How Precious Are Your Thoughts To Me

TEXTS TO PAUSE & PONDER ON

William Stewart | Odessa, Ontario, Canada

Psalms 139 is likely familiar to most Bible students because of how it characterizes God as our all-knowing (v 1-6), ever-present (v 7-12) Creator (v 13-16). These verses are filled with a number of great quotes. For example:

*...there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.
Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?
I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. (Psalm 139:4, 7, 14)*

Before speaking of the wicked and their ways (v 19-24), we find an excellent statement of love for the will of God. Notice:

How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with You. (Psalm 139:17-18)

What words come to mind when you think about God's word? Precious is the word used by the Psalmist. In Strong's Concordance, this word is defined as:

...to be heavy, valuable; to make rare, be precious, be prized, be set by, withdraw.

Do you find God's word to be valuable? Is the Bible your most prized possession in this life, not because of who gave it to you, a pretty binding or such, but for its content?

Each and every word of God is precious. We can spend enormous amounts of time studying a single verse and continue to gain greater and greater appreciation for the message therein. In fact, our study will often result in us looking at specific words within a text, and as we do so, we benefit even further.

But consider this, if a single verse of Scripture can be so amazing, so wonderful, so encouraging; how about the whole thing? If the parts are valuable, precious, and prized, then the whole is even more so.

In the words of the Psalmist,

How great is the sum of them! (v 17b)

The writer uses hyperbole in verse 18, stressing the exceeding greatness of God's word. Of course, there are more grains of sand in the world than words in the Bible, but his goal is for us to know how boundless, how immeasurable, how vast and inexhaustible the word of God is.

May we love and obey the Lord and His word.

The Deity of Christ: Refuting Some False Arguments

Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba | Lagos, Nigeria

The very idea that Jesus was the first to be created is not only absurd, but it is inconsistent with the teaching of the Bible.

Recently I met some preachers in the Lord's church who affirm that Jesus Christ was created. By "created" they mean that Jesus Christ at a point before the creation of the world, was not in existence. Then God the Father had to create Him, after which He (the Father), together with Jesus created all other things in the world.

Interestingly, these same preachers admit that Jesus is God. Quite strangely, they made Jesus a "created God" who is qualified to receive worship. Some arguments were advanced in support of their affirmation. It is my desire to address these arguments and see what the Bible says about them. It seems to me that the concept of Jesus being a "created God" would be like the concept of a "married bachelor" – both statements are not only contradictions in thought but they simply do not exist. Let us look at some of the arguments used by them to defend this doctrine.

Jesus Was Begotten

One of the arguments used by these folks is about the usage of the word "begotten" found in Hebrews 1:5. The text reads: "For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"? They argue that the Greek word translated "begotten" as used in this verse means "to bring forth" or "to create" and that since Jesus Christ was begotten by the Father, then it means He was created. By this very argument, they have successfully made angels uncreated beings. Notice that Hebrews 1:5 clearly states that none of the angels were ever said to be begotten. And if "begotten" means "created" as these brethren affirm, then the simple meaning of the text would be that none of the angels were ever created. But we know that angels were created as evident in Psalm 148:5. In an attempt to prove that Jesus was created by running to this passage, these folks have inadvertently made the angels uncreated!

But then, we also find the word "begotten" used in 1 Corinthians 4:15 when Paul told the Corinthians that "though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." Would anyone argue that the Corinthians were created by Paul? Was it that they were not existing, and Paul had to bring them into existence? Paul is simply indicating that the Corinthians are now in a new position. He was the instrument of their conversion to Christ by means of the gospel; by preaching it to them, that is, by the truth. Whatever the word begotten means, it surely does not mean that the Corinthians were not in existence and then Paul brought them into existence. Surely, the word would not also mean in Hebrews 1:5 that there was a time Jesus was not in existence and God had to bring him into existence.

Jesus Had A Father Before He Came to Earth

Another argument from Hebrews 1:5 often used by these preachers is that Jesus had a Father from when He was in heaven. And just like the earthly fathers always exist before their children, God the Father existed before the Son. But whether Jesus was a Son in heaven or not is not an indication that He was created. The truth is: it is erroneous to suggest (or state) that the word "Son" as used for Jesus necessitates any kind of physical begetting since we are "sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26). In the United States, George Washington is often called "the father of his country" without any understanding or suggestion that those in the U.S. are his biological sons. So far as I know, he never had any "sons" in that sense. Quite often I have read of a person who is called "the father of medicine," or "the father of sociology" or "the father of" something else, without the idea of that individual having begotten a "son" in the sense that "son" is so often used in the Bible. Jesus was not the "Son" because He had a beginning (e.g., that He was a created being). He was the agent of creation, as the apostle John wrote in John 1, not a part of what was created!

Jesus Was Made

There is another argument that these brethren advance from Hebrews 1:4. The text says in the King James Version: "being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." These brethren say that the word "made" means "to create" or "to assemble."

And because the Bible says Jesus was “made so much better than the angels,” then it means He was created better than the angels. But we find this same word used in Matthew 23:15 when Jesus said “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves” (KJV). Was Jesus implying that the Scribes and Pharisees created the proselyte? Was the proselyte not in existence before he was made by the scribes and Pharisees? In this verse, Jesus was simply speaking of the conversion of the proselyte. There is a change in his position and in that sense, he was “made.” In the same way, Hebrews 1:4 is not even talking about creation rather, it speaks of Christ’s role in the scheme of redemption and what He had become. If a man was made (or became) the director of a company, that would not mean he was created by the company or that he never existed before he was made such. It is very inappropriate to just stick to one meaning of a word and insist that such meaning would be applied in every instance the word occurs without regard for the context.

Jesus Is the Firstborn of every creature

Speaking of Christ in Colossians 1:15, Paul said “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.” And these brethren think that the word firstborn is used in this passage to mean that Christ was the first to be created. But the usage of the word “firstborn” simply indicates that Jesus is supreme over all creatures (not that He is a created being). It refers to the firstborn in position and not in time. For instance, when we refer to Jill Biden as the “first ady” of the United States of America, we do not mean she is the first woman in time. We simply refer to her as the first lady in position. Another good example is found in Jeremiah 31:9 when God called Ephraim His firstborn. However, notice from Genesis 48:14 that Ephraim was the younger son while Manasseh was the firstborn: “And Israel stretched out his right hand ...upon Ephraim’s head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh’s head,...for Manasseh was the firstborn.” Colossians 3:16 clearly tells us the very point of verse 15 – everything was created by Jesus and for Jesus – He is supreme! If Jesus is a created being, then it means that He created Himself, based on verse 16.

Jesus is the Beginning of the Creation of God

The last argument we would consider is found in Revelation 3:14 where Jesus said He is “the Beginning of the creation of God:” These brethren interpret this passage to mean that Jesus is the first to be created. However, the term “beginning,” as employed in Revelation 3:14, does not suggest a commencement in time for Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, these brethren claim that “the beginning of the creation” was a time prior to Genesis 1 (before God created the world) and that it was sometime within this period that Jesus was created. But the Bible teaches that the beginning of the creation began with Genesis when God created the heavens and the earth. Notice in Mark 10:6 (“But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female’) and Mark 13:19 (“For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.”) that Jesus referred to the beginning of the creation and this points back to Genesis when God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were all present in creating all things. Hence, “the beginning of the creation” does not refer to a time before Genesis as these people contend that Jesus was created. Since Jesus was present at “the beginning of the Creation,” it is an assumption to find another beginning of the creation in which it is claimed that Jesus was created.

So, this phrase as used in Revelation 3:14 simply indicates that Jesus is “first in rank,” not first to be created. The Greek word that is rendered “beginning” in Revelation 3:14 is arche. The term is employed in various senses in the Bible. It may refer to the “beginning” of something (e.g., in “the beginning of the gospel” (Mark 1:1) and it can also signify the “first cause,” of a thing, or that by which something “begins to be,” i.e., the originating source. In Revelation 3:14 arche is used of Christ as the uncreated principle, the active cause of creation. The term in this text is not to be understood as the first of created things. Notice that in Revelation 22:13, Christ refers to Himself as the “beginning [arche] and the end [telos].” If “beginning” suggests that there was a time when Christ did not exist, but that He came into existence as the first being of God’s creation, does “end” indicate that there will be a point at which the Savior will go out of existence? The question hardly needs a response. Also, in Isaiah 48:12 the Lord God described Himself

as “the first” and “the last.” Did He mean to indicate that there was a time when He did not exist? The very idea that Jesus was the first to be created is not only absurd, but it is inconsistent with the teaching of the Bible.

The Bible Teaches That Jesus Is From Everlasting

The Bible teaches that Jesus is God and that suggests He was not created. He accepted worship on different occasions (Matthew 8:2,9:18,14:33,15:25,28:9,17; Hebrews 1:6). Peter refused to accept worship since it was improper to worship a creature like him (Acts 10:25-26). Romans 1:25 makes it clear it is wrong to worship the creature: “who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” Creature worship is sinful and if Jesus was created as these brethren affirm, it would be a sin for Him to have been worshipped.

Micah 5:2, in speaking of Jesus teaches that His “goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” This means He has been from eternity. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made (John 1:3, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:2, Genesis 1:26).

When Christ Comes Again

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

Preterism

On the nights of July 20-21, 23-24, 2020, Bruce Reeves and Holger Neubauer debated the question, “Will Jesus Really Come Again?” Bruce Reeves affirmed, “The Scriptures teach that Jesus of Nazareth will come again in the future to raise both the wicked and righteous for eternal judgment.” Holger Neubauer affirmed, “The Scriptures teach that Jesus of Nazareth returned the second and final time in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.” Mr. Neubauer holds to a theory propogated in modern times by the late Max R. King in his book *The Spirit of Prophecy*. The position of King, Neubauer, and others, called “Preterism” or the A.D. 70 Theory, is that the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 is the final fulfillment of all biblical prophecy. Therefore, there will be no future, literal return of Christ or resurrection of the dead.

In First Corinthians chapter fifteen, the apostle Paul specifically refutes this error. He rebuked them:

“Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen” (1 Corinthians 15:12-13).

The resurrection of which Paul speaks is the same kind Christ experienced – a literal, bodily resurrection from the dead (cf. verses 1-8). To deny our future literal bodily resurrection is to deny that of the Lord.

How serious is this error?

“Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable” (1 Corinthians 15:12-19).

Our resurrection to which Paul refers is at “the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power” (1 Corinthians 15:24).

Preterism is damnable heresy.

Premillennialism

In contrast to the Preterists, Premillennialists affirm that Christ will establish a thousand-year, earthly material kingdom when he returns.

"... Christ will set up a literal kingdom in time which will last in history a thousand years and then go into an eternal form which will never be destroyed"... God's kingdom will be characterized by peace and equity, and by universal spirituality and knowledge of the Lord. Even the animals and the reptiles will lose their ferocity and no longer be carnivorous. All men will have plenty and be secure. There will be a chicken in every pot and no one will steal it!"(Hal Lindsey, The Late Great Planet Earth. 165, 6).

But, according to the inspired apostle Paul:

"For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power" (1 Corinthians 15:21-24).

Christ will indeed return, not to establish His kingdom, which presently exists (Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9) and is spiritual rather than material (John 18:36; Romans 14:17), but to deliver the kingdom to God the Father that "God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28).

If Christ has been raised from the dead, He now sits on the throne of David and reigns as King (Acts 2:29-32). To deny that Christ is now our King is to deny His resurrection. Premillennialism is damnable heresy.

The Truth

When Christ returns:

- All the dead will be raised at the same hour (John 5:28-29).
- The living will be instantly changed (1 Corinthians 15:50-54).
- The material universe will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10-12).
- All mankind will be judged (Matthew 25:31-33; John 5:22; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12-13).
- The righteous will inherit eternal life in heaven (Matthew 25:34; 1 Peter 1:3-5).
- The wicked will receive eternal punishment in hell (Matthew 10:28; 25:41; Revelation 14:11; 20:14-15).

Conclusion

Then we will spend eternity either in heaven or hell (Matthew 25:46). Are you ready for the return of Christ? "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matthew 24:44).

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