



# Shepherd's Voice.

Summer 2014  
Free!

M A G A Z I N E

*..... lift up your eyes and look at the fields,  
for they are already white for harvest!"*

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## MAGAZINE

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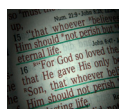


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**Our Mistake:**

In the 2014 Spring Issue, *Elihu's Discourse*, Job 21:15 referenced on page 6 was the incorrect scripture to quote Job. The corrected verse is: "Does it seem good to You that You should oppress, that You should despise the work of Your hands, and smile on the counsel of the wicked?" (Job 10:3).

In the Winter 2014 Issue, the article *The Necessities of Life and Divine Healing*, the book referenced on page 5, *The History of the Anointing of the Sick*, has a typographical error of the author's name. The author is Kagrel Reenact, not Karl Reenact.

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Greetings!

One of the biggest challenges facing the seventh day Sabbath church of God community is what our approach should be with mainstream Christianity. Even this first sentence was difficult to compose. The inclusiveness of some Sabbatarians has been a threat to some, labeling it as compromise, and the genesis to apostasy. The more exclusive groups of Sabbatarians have labeled the mainstream as a counterfeit Christianity, and should be rejected having no value to God's overall plan. To be sure there are fraudulent belief systems that have entrapped many. This is not an easy subject, but can we agree there might be a Biblical precedence on the proper approach to those who have belief in the God of the Bible but have error in doctrine, and mixed with practices that are pagan in origin? Can we have faith in Jesus Christ to have the foresight to help us in guiding us through these questions?

Let us be clear. God will not compromise on His ways and His will. He is also sovereign, and He alone will make the decisions on who is saved. We need to also understand God is inclusive (Ephesians 1:10, 1 Timothy 2:4) and we do not know all that He is doing with any individual or groups of individuals at any given time. The fact remains that we have been given the commission to get the Word out and embrace His will. Jesus Christ gave the vision of the fields, the great numbers, ripe for the harvest, inspiring our cover for this issue.

*Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields...*

We need an answer on moving forward on purveying the Truth to the many in the mainstream and in the world. If the field is as vast as Christ says it is, we need an inclusive approach, and not the attitude that pushes the plan all forward into the future. Now is the day of salvation.

The article *Learning From The Samaritans* gives us insight on how God has dealt with those who have a mixture of truth and error and yet still believe in a Messiah to be sent by God. Another lesson from the Samaritans is how Jesus taught His disciples on how to react to the same group of people. He even has expectations of those who have only partial understanding, and shows a willingness to teach those who He may not be calling.

Recently a question in our circles had arisen in regards to what doctrines need to be adhered to for one to be saved, and has inspired the article *How does the Bible Define a Believer*. One can appreciate the zeal for doctrines that point to the Truth, particularly those doctrines that are sound and healthy, but doctrines do not save. Jesus Christ is the Truth and He has reserved within Himself the power to choose those whom He calls. If we believe all that is required for salvation is the right knowledge of good doctrine, then we would also have to believe Christ's death was in vain. What I have witnessed is that those who are drawn after doctrine in this manner will likely become contentious and have little common ground with others. For them the Christian walk becomes a debate instead of a transformation, with their only fellowship being reserved for cyberspace and doctrinal debates. The article *Love is More Important Than Biblical Interpretation* gives more insight to the subject of doctrine and the proper use of it.

Finally, we were saddened by the loss of Dr. Bruce Horne, who was a founding editor, confidant and supporter of *SVM* at its inception. Dr. Horne passed suddenly this spring and he will be sadly missed. We have included in this issue his obituary. Please take the opportunity to learn about Dr. Horne on page 9.

In Christ's Service  
Jim Patterson

# Learning from the Samaritans

For the mature Christian, the last words of Jesus Christ to His apostles are utterly vital. They certainly have application throughout the entire church age. They were not just for the first century.

*Therefore, when they [the apostles] had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight (Acts 1:6-9).*

Christ warns against the tendency of believers to pay too much attention to the time of His return and the restoration of His Kingdom, because we don't know exactly when Christ's return will occur (Matthew 24:36, 42-44, 50; 25:13; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 12:35-40, 46; 21:7-8, 34-36; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 3:3; 16:15). Rather, He promised us power from the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses to four different types of people. **So let us**

**do that!** The original apostles were obviously witnesses to the teachings and miracles of Christ. They were also witnesses of the power of the Holy Spirit delivered in Acts 2. Believers, today, are not an eye-witnesses to

## Where to Witness

Once we recognize that the job of a believer is to be filled with the Holy Spirit and be a witness, we need to consider that last part of Christ's statement which tells us where:

*"...in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8).*

These areas were well known to the twelve apostles. They were in Jerusalem at the time (Acts 1:4); they had traveled through much of Judea during their ministry with Christ; they had traveled through Samaria, even though the Jews wanted little to do with the Samaritans (John 4:9); and to them, the "end of the earth" included the entire Roman Empire and whatever was beyond. As we read the rest of the New Testament, we see that the Gospel went to all of those places.

What do these four areas mean for believers today? Those in Jerusalem would be analogous to the believers in our congregation—those who are nearby us. Those in Judea would be those with similar beliefs to us, even though they are further way. And lastly, the "end of the earth" is still everyone we know about—all seven billion of them—many with no



*Statue of The Good Samaritan  
by Francois-Leon Sicard - Tuileries garden - Paris*

Christ's earthly ministry, but we are witnesses to His Word by reading it and teaching it to a world that largely does **not** read the Scripture. We are also witnesses to Christ's works in our lives.

knowledge of Christ or the Bible. But what about the Samaritans? Is Christ still telling us to evangelize the group of about a hundred people today who trace their lineage back to the original Samaritans and still practice that religion? Or is it something more important. The rest of this article will answer that question.

### Who Are the Samaritans?

The Bible gives a lot of detail on who the Samaritans are and how their religion evolved. It is all worth reading to help us understand our situation today. Notice in 2 Kings 17:23:

*<sup>23</sup> Until the LORD removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day.*

*<sup>24</sup> Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities.<sup>25</sup> And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they did not fear the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them.<sup>26</sup> So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, “The nations whom you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land.”<sup>27</sup> Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, “Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the rituals of the God of the land.”*

*<sup>28</sup> Then one of the priests whom*

*they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.*

*<sup>29</sup> However every nation continued to make gods of its own, and put them in the shrines on the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in the cities where they dwelt.<sup>30</sup> The men of Babylon made Succoth Benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima,<sup>31</sup> and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.<sup>32</sup> So they feared the LORD, and from every class they appointed for themselves priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places.<sup>33</sup> They feared the LORD, yet served their own gods—according to the rituals of the nations from among whom they were carried away.*

*<sup>34</sup>To this day they continue practicing the former rituals; they do not fear the LORD, nor do they follow their statutes or their ordinances, or the law and commandment which the LORD had commanded the children of Jacob, whom He named Israel,<sup>35</sup> with whom the LORD had made a covenant and charged them, saying: “You shall not fear other gods, nor bow down to them nor serve them nor sacrifice to them;<sup>36</sup> “but the LORD, who brought you up from the land of Egypt with great power and an outstretched arm, Him you shall fear, Him you shall worship, and to Him you shall offer sacrifice.<sup>38</sup> “And the statutes, the ordinances, the law, and the commandment which He wrote for you, you shall be careful to observe forever; you shall not fear other gods.<sup>38</sup> “And the covenant that I*

*have made with you, you shall not forget, nor shall you fear other gods.<sup>39</sup> “But the LORD your God you shall fear; and He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies.”*

*<sup>40</sup> However they did not obey, but they followed their former rituals.<sup>41</sup> So these nations feared the LORD, yet served their carved images; also their children and their children’s children have continued doing as their fathers did, even to this day.*

Notice that God himself sent lions among the Samaritans because they did not fear Him at all. When they began to fear the true God to some degree, the lions stopped. Yes, God himself had a hand in creating this half-way religion. He commanded them to fully obey Him, but let them remain under His limited protection even when they did not fully obey. Today, we know that the ancient Samaritans had their own version of the Old Testament, altered in places, but largely the same. But even with this knowledge of the truth, they continued their worship of many false gods, and did not obey the truth of the writings that they did have.

So is there a large group of people like this today, to whom we must be a witness? Yes! Mainstream evangelical Christianity! They use the Bible—with a few alterations and ignoring many parts to fit their doctrines. They also mix in the practices of other religions. Many celebrate holidays that contain Santa Claus, Yule logs, Easter bunnies, Halloween evil spirits, the Roman Cupid, Leprechauns, etc. Their church building construction frequently makes use of steeples, gargoyles and the trappings of other religions.

They have doctrines that are partly

true and partly erroneous. Most picture God as a “trinity”, a “three in one” concept found in Hinduism, even though the word “Trinity” is not found in the Bible and the New Testament constantly refers to two divine beings (Acts 7:55-56; Rom 1:7; 15:6; 1 Corinthians 1:3, 9; 8:6; 2 Corinthians 1:2-3; Galatians 1:1-3; Ephesians 1:2-3, 17; 5:20; 6:23; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2-3; 2:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3; 3:11, 13; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-2; 2:16; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philemon 1:3; 1 Peter 1:2-3; 2 Peter 1:2; 1 John 1:3, 2:22; 2 John 1:3, 9; Jude 1:1; Revelation 11:15).

Most mainstream Christians teach an immortal, conscious soul that either goes to heaven or hell at death—rather than the Biblical “*dead know nothing*” (Ecclesiastes 9:5) and are awaiting a resurrection (Daniel 12:1-3; John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 11:13, 39-40). Some Christians falsely teach that their human leaders sat in between the believers and Christ, and had authority over their salvation (2 Corinthians 1:24; 1 Peter 5:3).

It is not within the scope of this article—or even within the scope of the lifetime of this author—to cover all the arguments and resolve all doctrinal differences. He has written much on these doctrines and will probably write more. But it is on this author’s heart to help everyone see how Christ deals with “Samaritans” today, and how Bible-adhering Christians should deal with the mainstream evangelical Christians of today.

### How Did Christ Deal with Samaritans?

Some believers might expect that Christ would have nothing to do with people who have a wrong concept

of God or who hold false doctrines. As a matter of fact, that was the approach the early Apostles took to the Samaritans. They wanted to kill them for their persecution of the truth:

*And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?” But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.” And they went to another village (Luke 9:52-56).*

But Jesus told them they were of the wrong spirit. And so today, when Christians have different beliefs, they often become upset with each other and sometimes want to destroy each other. Sure, it is easy to be angry at a group that wants to destroy you. But Christ said we are of a wrong spirit if we think like this. We can read and see how Christ dealt with Samaritans. He talked to them. He shared things with them He had not yet shared with His apostles. Jesus shocked His disciples and the Samaritans as well!

Read the whole account beginning in John 4:4:

*But He [Christ] needed to go through Samaria. <sup>5</sup>So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup>Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.*

<sup>7</sup>*A woman of Samaria came to draw*

*water. Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink.” <sup>8</sup>For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. <sup>9</sup>Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” <sup>11</sup>The woman said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? <sup>12</sup>“Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?” <sup>13</sup>Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, <sup>14</sup>“but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” <sup>15</sup>The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.”*

<sup>16</sup>*Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” <sup>17</sup>The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ <sup>18</sup>“for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.” <sup>19</sup>The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. <sup>20</sup>“Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. <sup>22</sup>“You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is*

of the Jews. <sup>23</sup> “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. <sup>24</sup> “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” <sup>25</sup> The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.” <sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.”

<sup>27</sup> And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why are You talking with her?” <sup>28</sup> The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, <sup>29</sup> “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” <sup>30</sup> Then they went out of the city and came to Him. <sup>31</sup> In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” <sup>32</sup> But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” <sup>33</sup> Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?” <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. <sup>35</sup> “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! <sup>36</sup> “And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup> “For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ <sup>38</sup> “I sent you to reap that

for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

<sup>39</sup> And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I ever did.” <sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup> And many more believed because of His own word. <sup>42</sup> Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

<sup>43</sup> Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. <sup>44</sup> For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.

There are many principles that both Christ’s apostles then and we believers today need to learn:

1. Christ talked to the Samaritans apart from the disciples, while they were obtaining food—symbolic of spiritual knowledge—elsewhere. Even though the disciples had learned from the real Hebrew Old Testament and had learned much directly from Christ, they were not yet ready to realize that Christ could also work with people who knew substantially less than they.
2. The Samaritan woman asserts a doctrinal error, that Mount Gerizim is the place of worship rather than Jerusalem. Christ explains to the woman

that Samaritans have doctrinal errors—that they don’t know what they worship, but then goes on to explain a greater truth that even his disciples did not understand: God wants believers who will worship in spirit and in truth **anywhere**.

3. The woman is convicted by Christ’s divine ability to show her sin. She quickly goes evangelizing others and brings them to Christ. They recognize Him as the “Savior of the world” in a spiritual way. They do not ask about setting up any kind of physical kingdom or whether Jews, Samaritans or somebody else will be in charge.

4. The Samaritans knew the Old Testament prophecies of a Messiah to come, and they accepted Jesus as that Messiah. This passage occurs shortly after the turning of water to wine at Cana (John 2:1-11)—Christ’s first miracle! Many Samaritans accepted Jesus as Messiah long before His apostles realized He was the Messiah. See for yourself:

*When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:13-16).*

5. The Samaritans whom Christ taught did not begin to meet with the Jewish believers. If they did, they would have known Jesus was the Messiah. Christ

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did teach them for two days. Does the “*thousand years as one day*” (2 Peter 3:8) principle apply here? Will there be spiritual Samaritans—people who accept Jesus but misunderstand some of the Bible for two-thousand years?

6. Christ told His disciples not to say that it is four months until the harvest, but to realize that the fields were now ready for harvest. What did He mean? It was not too long since Jesus was at the Passover (John 2:23), which was in the first month of the year (Leviticus 23:5). Approximately 50 days later was the Feast of Weeks where all males were commanded to appear (Exodus 23:17; Leviticus 23:15-16; Deuteronomy 16:16)—in the third month of the year. It would have been sensible that Jesus and His disciples left Jerusalem immediately after Pentecost, when it would have been four months to the great fall harvest, the Feast of Ingathering or the Feast of Tabernacles (Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Leviticus 23:34). Jesus’ disciples were continually looking to the Feast of Ingathering which pictures the return of Christ as King of the Nations. (Jude 1:14-15; Isaiah 9:6-7; Psalm 2:8-9; 149:5-9, etc.) Jesus was telling them to look at the spiritual Pentecost harvest four months earlier, with its two leavened loaves (Leviticus 23:17) perhaps representing a mixture of true and false doctrine. The Samaritans were ready then.

The parallels between the Samaritans and the modern day evangelical Christians are striking. Both understand that they are sinners in need of a Savior. They accept Jesus as that Messiah—more quickly than those with good knowledge of the Old Testament. They keep to themselves—do not mingle with the first century Jews or today’s

Sabbatarian Christians that look down on them. They are both quick to teach others what they know about Christ.

### Who Shows Up When Christ Needs a Hero?

The Bible has more about Samaritans. When a man very knowledgeable in the Law asked Christ what was necessary for eternal life, here is the conversation that followed.

*And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?” So he answered and said, “ ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’ ” And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.” But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:25-29).*

This lawyer thought he “had it made”. If he could get Christ to give him a narrow definition of “neighbor”, he could feel good about applying the golden rule to a small group of people and treating everyone else in whatever manner was convenient for the moment. How did Christ respond? With the famous story of “the Good Samaritan”:

*Then Jesus answered and said: “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.” Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. “Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other*

*side.” But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. “So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. “On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’ ” “So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” And he said, “He who showed mercy on him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:30-37).*

Why did Christ choose a Samaritan for this parable? Why didn’t Christ tell a story where the hero was “one of My disciples” or “a righteous man” as he did in Matthew 10:41? The Priest and Levite were men who had knowledge. But it was the Samaritan who had compassion. How does the parable conclude? “*Go and do likewise.*”

Difficult as it may have been for them, the Jews, including the Priests and Levites, were told to imitate the compassion of the Samaritan. That does not mean that they were to accept Samaritan doctrine, but they were to love their neighbor as this Samaritan had done.

And it is just as difficult today. Sabbath-observing believers need to keep their correct knowledge, but they also need to “go and do likewise” when they see the compassion and other good works of Sunday-observing Christians.

*Continued on page 10*



## Passing of Bruce Horne

**Dr. Bruce Estes Horne**, of Knoxville, Tennessee, unexpectedly passed away May 22, 2014 of heart failure. He is survived by his wife, Janet Grant. He was born in Bristol, Tennessee, on April 24, 1953, to Emory Estes and Claire Evelyn Horn.

Bruce was a consultant and writer for *Shepherd's Voice Magazine* from its beginning in 2010 until his passing. His latest article was in the Winter, 2014, issue, entitled *Father Forgive Them*. It taught the simple, vital, message of Jesus Christ, to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Bruce served as the elder and main speaker in the Church of God, Knoxville, Tennessee—a congregation formed in January of this year. He produced CDs and DVDs of his sermons. He also traveled to other congregations and spoke as a guest speaker. He was always welcome in the Chicagoland Church of God.

In 2007, Dr. Bruce Horne formed the Bible Sabbath Ministries of the Church of God of East Tennessee, Inc., a Tennessee non-profit corporation. He was a host for the “World Tomorrow” television program produced by the Church of God Worldwide Ministries of Sevierville, TN from 2010 to 2013. He was looking forward to beginning his own video ministry through the Church of God, Knoxville.

Dr. Horne obtained a bachelor's degree from Tusculum College, Greeneville, Tenn. He earned his master's and doctor's degrees online, from Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont and then Walden University, Minneapolis, Minnesota. He taught English,



*Bruce with his wife, Janet*

education, and other humanities subjects in several educational institutions, usually in online classes. Schools included are: Tennessee State University, New Jersey state colleges, Ivy Tech Community College in Fort Wayne, Neumann University near Philadelphia, West Chester University in Pennsylvania, Temple University in Philadelphia and Roane State Community College in Harriman, Tennessee.

Bruce frequently attended the Winter Family Weekend in Lexington, Kentucky. There he made several presentations attempting to stir interest in forming an accredited college for Sabbath-keeping young people. He realized that Sabbath-keeping young people usually need more than a few days a year to bring their friendships together—but not many others grasped this vision.

The “Bruce Estes Horne” Facebook page currently contains many tributes from his wife, students and friends. He was very close to his wife, Janet, who has posted a memory of him

nearly every week since his death. Kim Gunner wrote: “As I work on this film today [*False Flags: The Movie*], I can't help but to think of my great friend and mentor, Bruce Estes Horne, whom this film is now dedicated to. I miss you my friend.” Dr. Horne also had several hobbies. These included restoring, maintaining classic cars, riding motorcycles, playing with his dog, Royal, and playing numerous musical instruments, patriot activities and NRA membership.

Bruce Horne will be missed by many. While nobody will ever “fill his shoes”, *SVM* encourages other believers to use the example of Dr. Horne's life as an encouragement to rise up and serve our God with the talents that He has given them.

*Precious in the sight of the LORD  
Is the death of His saints (Psalm  
116:15).*

*A good name is better than precious  
ointment, And the day of death than  
the day of one's birth (Ecclesiastes  
7:1).* 🇺🇸

### Christ's View of Churches with Various Strengths and Weaknesses

We do not have to guess if we want to know Christ's opinion of different churches with varying strengths and weaknesses. Revelation 2 and 3 contain seven letters from Christ to seven churches. Some of the churches were diligent, faithful and filled with love. Some endured hardship. Others were lukewarm, had false doctrine or were even considered "dead". All of these churches were within about 100 miles of each other. As you read through the descriptions of those churches, it is worthwhile to ponder the question: "If there were churches today with the exact same problems as those ancient churches, which ones would I be willing to attend?"

Did Christ declare some churches "true" and others "false?" Did He tell the people to go to the "right" churches? No, and No. He told each person to repent, and He promised a reward for those who would overcome in all seven of the churches. Repentance and overcoming are individual things, not church things. Indeed, most of the epistles of the New Testament are instructions and corrections to people in the churches at that time. Nearly all of the problems mentioned were experienced by someone in one of God's churches. In His earthly ministry, Christ explained:

*"He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. Either make the tree good and its fruit good,*

*or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit" (Matthew 12:30-33).*

The group a person is called from is not important. Christ had disciples who were fishermen, tax collectors, zealots (revolutionaries), priests, Pharisees, Sanhedrin members, etc. He taught us not to separate into church groups based upon the teachings of individuals (1 Corinthians 1:11-15; 3:1-9). Even so, as the doctrinal error (John 4:22) of using a different place of worship (Mt Gerizim instead of Jerusalem—John 4:20, NLT), separated the Samaritans from the Jewish believers, today, Sabbath keepers should consider the efforts Jesus made in Samaria, laying the groundwork to "finish His work," and not to use Sunday keeping as a boundary, but an opportunity.



### Bearing Fruit

The Bible has a lot to say about the different kinds of spiritual fruit that we bear. We will cite three verses:

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law (Galatians 5:22-23).*

*But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through same Spirit, to another*

*faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).*

*How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification (1 Corinthians 14:26).*

So what kind of fruit have seventh day groups provided over the centuries?

1. Organized Sabbath congregations and Feast day gatherings.
2. Taught many Biblical doctrines; the Sabbath, Feast days, the resurrection of the dead, clean meats, water baptism, fasting, divine healing, casting out of demons, the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, etc.
3. Mass produced various kinds of literature and electronic media and made it available to nearly every country on earth.
4. Brought hundreds of thousands—maybe millions of people to a personal knowledge of Christ.
5. Exposed erroneous doctrines that had been long accepted in Christianity.
6. Provided a few schools to educate young people.
7. Produced a small amount of generally available Bible study reference material.
8. Produced a small amount of Christian music used in praise and worship.

So what have Sunday-observing groups provided over the centuries?

1. Copied the Scriptures and provided translations to nearly every language on earth. Wycliffe Bible Society plans to have the job **finished** by 2050. This includes isolated tribes of only a few hundred people who have no written language. Wycliffe learns their spoken language, makes a written language for them and translates the Bible into it.
2. Printed about six billion copies of the Bible and distributed it to nearly every hotel and institution on earth.
3. Produced millions of Christian songs and millions of copies of hymn books used in praise and worship.
4. Built and staffed tens of thousands of missions to help the poor and struggling, both in their own countries and around the world, touching the lives of many millions of people.
5. Produced thousands of Christian schools.
6. Organized millions of congregations and Bible studies of all types and purpose.
7. Produced millions of Bible study reference works: commentaries, concordances, lexicons, topical bibles, atlases, websites, etc.
8. Brought a message about Christ to millions of people, bringing about obvious changes from all manner of sins and difficulties.
9. Influenced the USA and numerous other countries to have civil laws at least partly corresponding to the Scriptures.

Yes, it is quite obvious that the “Samaritan” Christians have produced a lot more programs and materials than their seventh day brethren. That does not make the truth of the Bible any less true. God is able to work with people with limited knowledge. The New Testament was not available to the world for over 4000 years. The Bible has only been generally available to the common man for the last 400 years. God is able to work through imperfection—the Bible itself is the history of that.

### The Golden Rule of the Body of Christ

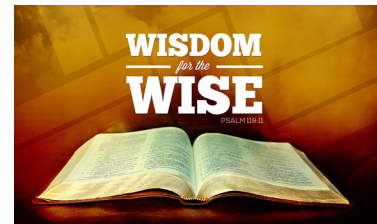
When a long-time Sabbath-keeper visits a Sunday church, he might hear one of their ministers say:

*“We know there are seventh-day cult members in the meeting here today. God wants you to repent of that and come down here and accept Christ tonight.”*

The Sabbath-keeper’s reaction is to probably totally disregard that message: he has been baptized, had hands laid on him and received the Holy Spirit. He may well have been healed by prayers of ministry or brethren. He knows that God has guided him and that God has been very real in his life. He probably will not feel the need to argue with the Sunday minister, but will give up on any kind of meaningful dialogue with him because the Sabbatarian knows he is a believer and the Sunday-keeping minister is not going to convince him otherwise.

Most Sabbatarians would have little trouble understanding the last paragraph. But many have a terrible time understanding the reverse situation. When Sabbath-keepers refer to their group as “the true church” or “the church”, when they call other churches “the great whore” or “counterfeit Christianity”, they don’t realize that there are huge numbers of Sunday-meeting Christians who will disregard such labels in the same way. They believe they have repented and have been redeemed from their sins. Many dedicate nearly all of their productive hours to serving God in some way. They may have witnessed healings and other miracles. When Sabbath-keepers say or imply they are not Christians unless they adopt certain doctrines, it effectively stops further communications. They are not interested in Sabbatarian Bible teaching because it appears to start with the premise that they, the Sunday-observers, do not know God, but in their own experience they believe that they do!

Seventh day believers must seriously think about how effective they would be without any of the above things done by Sunday-observing people. What Bibles would we have to read? What reference works would we study? What songs would we sing in our services? Do we seriously believe that all these things that help and inspire us were produced without the Holy Spirit? The solution to this dilemma is simple and works very well. **Seventh Day believers need to acknowledge the good works that Sunday-observing Christians have done. When mainstream believers see the love of Christ in seventh-day brethren along with the greater knowledge of His plan; they will be much more likely to listen to their sound biblical teaching.**



### Conclusion

This writer realizes that many Sabbatarian believers may be uncomfortable with this article. It is easy to grow accustomed to the idea that God is pleased with us because we have the right knowledge. **He is pleased with our right knowledge!** But knowledge is only one fruit of the Spirit. We need to seek more fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25; 1 Corinthians 12:31). We need to realize that there are others that will hear much better if we acknowledge their belief in Christ and the good works they have done. We read their bible helps, we sing their songs. We can reach them with the love of God and the knowledge of God much better than by “commanding fire to come down from heaven” (Luke 9:52-56) or by pouring it out of our mouths. 🙏

## THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB

A very important part of the celebration of Unleavened Bread is the shed blood of the lamb in the Passover ceremony. For old covenant Israel it was a reminder of the release from the bondage of Egypt, the blood on the door post saved all who participated in that ritual.

The spilling of blood even today is a very important part of the symbolic ritual of the Passover. Many however speak of the blood of the Lamb and sing songs such as “there is power in the blood,” but few have grasped a real depth of understanding on the subject. How important was the spilling of blood in both of the covenants God made with man? What function did it have in the old and what in the new? To answer these things we must start in the beginning where God created animals and man.

### THE BLOOD OF MAN AND ANIMALS

Gen. 2:7 “*And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul*”. Man was made out of the dust of the earth. God made his bones and set them one to the other, tied upon them sinew and muscle woven in and out with vessels and veins filled with fluids. He wired him with electronics of magnificent workings, gave him blood, and set within his brain the spirit of man. It was then that He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

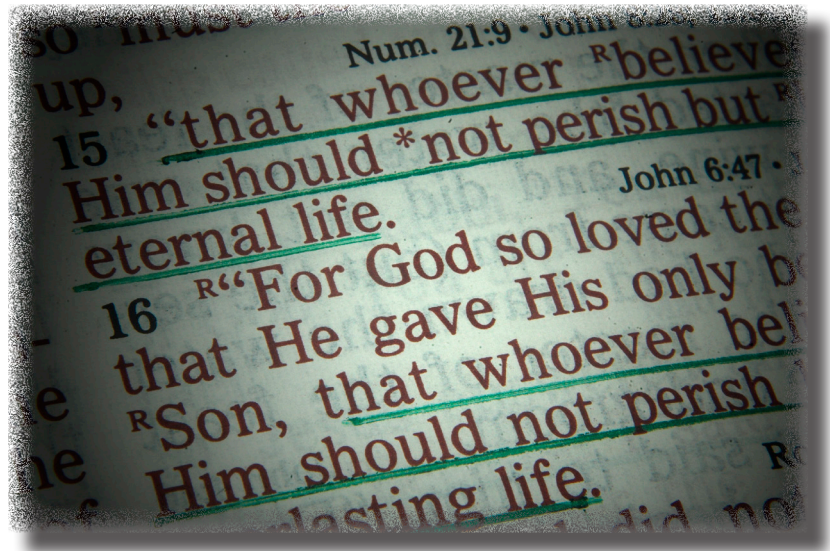
It was a sudden gust of air filled with oxygen that started the lungs and heart into action (a divine Heimlich maneuver) and sent life-giving blood coursing to every part. The spirit in man now had a living body to actuate (Ecclesiastes 12:7; 1 Corinthians 2:11). This is especially true when we examine the conception and gestation of a human being in the womb. The fetus is in possession of the spirit in man (witnessed by survival of premature births or Genesis 25:21-23). It survives with this spirit by transfer of vitality from the life-giving blood of the mother, but upon birth it takes its own breath of life and separates its life-giving blood from that of the mother. This spirit that was placed within the human brain was programmed with only the basic information. For the man, it was limited greatly from what was given to the animals, being sufficient enough to operate the body. The animal’s spirit on the other hand was provided with a full range of instinct for life skills and survival.

If one were to remove the blood from the man or the animal he would die. Remove an arm or a leg, or remove various organs and the man /animal could still remain alive. Remove the spirit in man, and the body could still be kept alive as we have now learned by observing brain dead people on life support systems.

### THE BLOOD OF RIGHTEOUS ABEL

Gen 4:8-10 “*And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and slew him. And the Lord said unto Cain, where is your brother Abel? And he said I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper? And He said, what have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries unto Me from the ground.*”

When Cain killed his brother, the Angels delivered the spirit in man back to God who gave it. (Luke



16:22; Ecclesiastes 12:7) His body and blood, being physical, remained on earth. When God received Abel's spirit His feelings no doubt were "what is this doing here..... What happened to the life of his body"? We learned that it was Abel's blood (life) that cried out to God from the ground, but how?.....well... God now had a spirit of man returned which told Him that something had happened to the life of the body it was operating. The spirit of man does not function apart from a body that it has to operate. (Job 32:8, Ecclesiastes 3:19-21) The physical man lives because of the spirit of man and the breath of life that is carried in the blood. (Job 34:14 spirit and breath)

The life that is supplied by the blood is so important that God gave His people a command that they not eat any blood.

Leviticus. 17: 11 *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul (Nephesh)."*

The life of a physical being is in the blood and so it was fitting that the death penalty for sin be satisfied with the taking of life by spilling the blood.

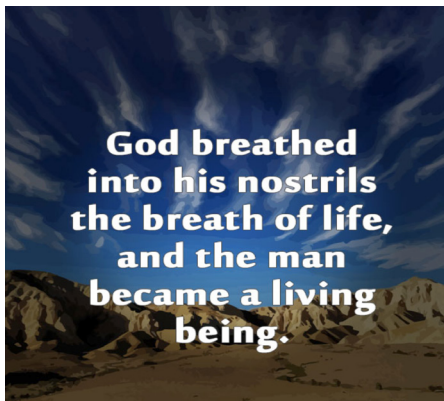
### THE FIRST BLOOD SACRIFICE

The first sacrifice given for mankind was for Adam and Eve after they sinned. God made tunics of animal skins to cover them (Genesis 3: 6-13, 21). Man's attempt to cover for his own sin was an insufficient fragile piece of vegetation that would soon perish. Animal skins properly cared for can last a lifetime. To make these tunics for them, God had to kill at least two animals. In killing them their life was taken by

the shedding of their life-giving blood. It is good to note here that Cain brought only vegetables for His offering and Abel an animal.

The message seems clear that even at this point in time, a blood sacrifice was recognized as a confession of sin and a means to atone for it. Cain obviously did not believe he needed to have any sin atoned for. In Matthew 5:24, *"Leave there your gift before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift"*. Jesus makes it plain that one must reconcile with one's brother before one's sacrifice is accepted. In Genesis 4:7, *"If you do well, shall you not be accepted? And if you do not well, sin lies at the door..."*

We see the same thing communicated to Cain. His sacrifice was in effect left at the door of the altar; if he had recognized his need to reconcile with his brother he would have changed his offering in order that he be justified before God for the hatred he harbored in his heart.



It is important to note that Exodus. 23:18-19 and Genesis 4:4 are consistent with the peace, trespass and sin offerings (Exodus 29:14; Leviticus 4:24-26). Cain's sin had begun at the jealousy level and then escalated to that of envy, a condition that required it to be addressed. If troubled relationships

are addressed at the peace offering level they are less likely to take root and escalate into the level of a transgression of law (sin). The stage was set with Cain's sin for God to set forth the great precept for love at the human level *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself"*, the lack of which was blatantly confessed by Cain in his words *"Am I my brother's keeper?"*

Abel had brought a blood sacrifice because he saw there was a need, not because that was all he had. Cain on the other hand had plenty of vegetables and could have bartered with his brother for an animal if need be. The lesson here is that it takes the human elements of humility, acknowledgment, confession and forgiveness to keep peace with one's neighbor. Under the old covenant this work of keeping one's attitude toward one's brother proper required a blood sacrifice of an animal. Under the new covenant this same work requires the blood sacrifice of Christ.

### BLOOD PAYS THE DEBT

Only the shedding of blood pays the debt of sin and provides a durable covering for sin. When we look at the first Passover for Israel we see that only those who had blood displayed on the door posts were spared the penalty of death (Exodus 12:12-15). That blood paid for the sin of the people and they became unleavened spiritually. The following seven days of Unleavened Bread pictured that state of being for them, and they were reminded of it every time they ate their daily bread made in kneading troughs void of leavening. In symbolic language, Paul expresses this very thing to the Corinthians. 1 Corinthians. 5:7

*“Purge out therefore the old leaven (maintain the cleanliness), that you may be (remain) a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”* The only way one can become unleavened is to have the debt for his sin paid.

Israel symbolically became unleavened through the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, blood was spilled, life was taken. A covering for their sin and shame was given....a durable one, one that was a reflection of the status of righteousness provided for an individual that truly confesses his fault and strives to love and honor God and be his brother's keeper. The durability of this payment and covering for the sinner's debt was fittingly played out symbolically in Israel's garments that endured the forty years in the wilderness.

### DEBT PAID ESTABLISHES RIGHTEOUSNESS

Paul, in explaining to the Romans the effort of some to establish their own righteousness by law keeping, says this; Romans 10:5

*“For Moses describes the righteousness which is of the law: the man who does these things shall live by them.”*

What is expressed here is that there is a righteousness produced by law keeping, which is a clean slate so to speak. You can't charge someone with theft if he has not stolen. A man who keeps the law of God does well by it and does not invoke the penalty of sin which is death; so he lives by virtue of having kept the law. But this does not cover for the sin he might commit, or has committed in the past, or for any mistakes made. It also does not force God to declare him righteous, for righteousness is a status, not the actions of law

keeping. If he has kept the law perfectly he still could stand before God unrighteous if his motive was wrong. eg. keeping it simply because he had to (unacceptable) instead of because he desired to (acceptable). This human condition is exposed in the incident of the ruler who came to Christ asking what he might do to inherit eternal life (Luke 18:18-24). The reason why he diligently kept all the commandments from his youth was exposed by his reluctance to give up the blessings received for doing them, his motive was wrong. To have nothing in this world and still love the law exposes the real condition of the heart. It was David who lived under the old covenant that earned the reputation for being a man after God's own heart. This was Israel's downfall and is the downfall of many today; no status of righteousness can be given if the heart is not right. Israel was corrected on this point (Deuteronomy 10:16, Jeremiah 4:4) and circumcision of the heart was the solution.

Paul is not speaking evil of the law when he speaks of the righteousness of the law. He is not antinomian. He understood Leviticus 18:3-5, which outlines fundamental human behaviors which are kept under control with the law of God. What Paul is bringing out is this; When God looks down upon us, all the righteousness of law keeping is spoiled by the blemish of any transgression no matter how small or even if it was accidental. All the law keeping you can do will not pay that debt of death incurred. Blood shed is the only way the debt can be paid and the status of righteousness can be applied. When Christ steps in and applies His shed blood for the payment, the Father now sees only a spotless garment, the nakedness of sin now covered. You are now unleavened through faith, faith in the

sacrifice of Christ, faith in His shed blood. As in Romans 10:9, if you believe in the redemptive work of Christ, you will be saved.

For all those first fruits called under the old covenant, and who in their hearts believed in the redemptive work of the sacrificial lamb and its shed blood, their present status is righteous. As they lay in death, their debt was charged up on Jesus' account through the OT sacrificial system and then paid in full by His blood. In Colossians 2:14 we see this clearly:

*“Blotting out the handwriting (Cierographon =handwriting, legal bond ..... legal debt purchased by the blood of animals) and the ordinances (dogma = decree or ordinances..... the sacrificial system) that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.”* This we see also in Hebrews 9:15 *“And for this cause He is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death (shed blood), for the redemption (apolutrosis = ransom in full, riddance) of the transgressions (parabasis = violation, breaking) under the first testament (old covenant system) they which are called (under old covenant by context) might receive the promise of eternal life.”*

The spilling of blood under the old covenant when applied properly removed the person's sin to a debt list only; it was not paid off and canceled. David seems to have understood this because he speaks of sin as only being removed Psalms 103:12 *“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us”*. Isaiah also comprehended it as sin removed. Isaiah. 38:17 *“Behold for peace I had great bitterness: but you have in love to my soul delivered*

*it from the pit of corruption: for you have cast all my sins behind your back.”*

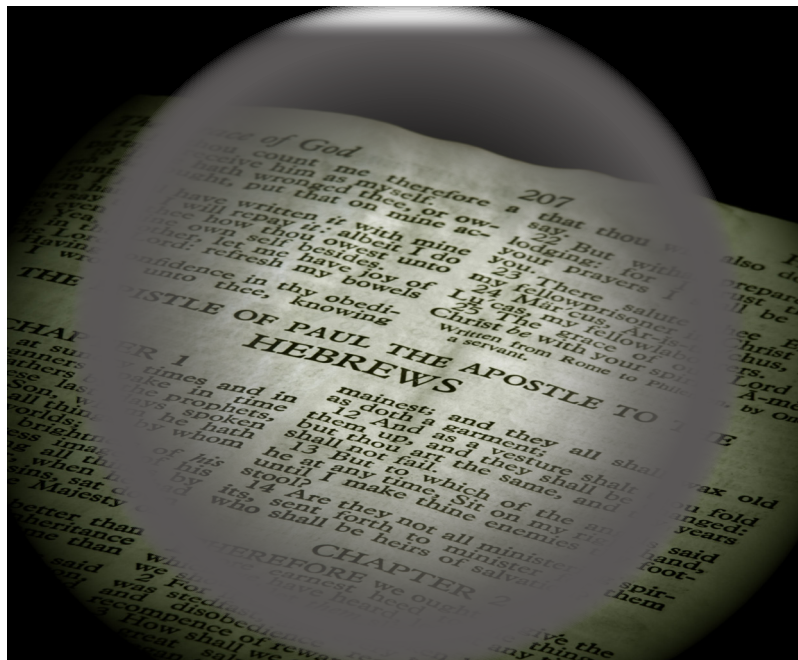
When we read of sin under the new covenant we see something quite different. Hebrews 10:4 *“It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away (aphaireo = cut off, take away) sins.”* Under the new covenant the sin debt is paid, it no longer stands against the individual as a threatening potential barrier to eternal life. Jesus’ last words when He died were *“It is finished.”* (teleo = conclude, execute, discharge a debt). While His blood paid for the debts incurred under the old covenant, it would be sufficient to pay for the debts incurred under the new covenant. The old covenant with the price of the blood of bulls

stayed the death penalty by putting the debt on someone else’s account, the account of the only one capable, the Messiah Jesus. When the time was right He came and paid it with His blood, blood that did more than just remove the debt to a grocery list, it paid the debt in full, obliterating it.

The understanding of sin removed to a debt list by the blood of bulls and paid for in full by the blood of Christ is also reflected in the purging of the conscience spoken of in Hebrews 10:1-3 where we see mentioned the fact that the law had a shadow of something to come, that something was the purging of the conscience. Not feeling guilty of sin requires the

understanding that the debt rung up for any transgressions is paid.

In Romans 2:15 *“Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another;”* we see how the conscience works as Paul explains the Gentile who keeps himself in check



not having the law. Sin is present when the conscience is affected with guilt, or if one is judged by his peers to have done wrong. In this example of the Gentile, their transgressions remained against them. The truly repentant Jew had his sin legally removed through the blood of bulls, but his conscience was reminded yearly that the debt was not yet paid.


Hebrews 9:8-9 puts it this way:

*“The Holy Spirit thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was still standing: Which was the figure for the time then present, in which were*

*offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;”*

The Jew had his sin removed, but exactly how that debt that convicted the conscience would be paid was not then revealed. The old covenant being glorious offered salvation through Christ

via the blood of bulls. The new covenant, more glorious, offered salvation directly through Christ. God, in working with mankind was faithful, just, and fair in providing every opportunity in every age for redemption. Many have erred thinking that those under the old covenant, and those before it, were doomed to certain failure by being denied the Spirit of God.

This fallacy is propagated by a misunderstanding of how and when the Spirit is given in each case. The plan God embarked upon was one that would unfold purposefully over many ages with patient loving care for the humans He created. Christ, the Lamb of God, was *“slain from the foundation of the world”* (Revelation 13:8). Age by age, step by step He draws man in, described in the plan He has hidden within His celebrations. In all of this, the blood of Christ figures heavily for without that spilling of life no man can obtain eternal life. 

# Ask Norm!



[asknorm@shepherdsvoicemagazine.org](mailto:asknorm@shepherdsvoicemagazine.org)

January 8, 2014

Dear Norm and Shepherd's Voice,

I finally got around to rereading Jim B. Peterson's article on *Significance of Barley and Wheat*. I also reread the rest of the articles and I would have to say this has been the best issue of Shepherd's Voice ever!

There is one point at the end of Jim B. Peterson's article that I don't agree with. I believe the famine of the word (Amos chapter 8, especially verse 11) took place from Malachi to Messiah's first coming. At the end of the age when the Beast reigns, the Two Witnesses will be preaching the truth and bringing woe on the Beast and his followers. When the Two Witnesses are killed, the Second Woe has passed. The Third Woe comes immediately and that is the end of the Beast's reign. (The Beast's 42 months = the Two Witnesses 1260 days).

Sure hope there are going to be more issues of the SV magazine! Spring 2013 is the last one we received. Thanks for the PABC newsletter. May God bless your efforts to help the homeless.

The cornucopia, associated with the Harvest Home and Thanksgiving comes from classic Greek "mythology". The "horn of plenty" is a representation of a goat god (demon) and a symbol of abundance. I remember every year at Thanksgiving time in grade school we had the cornucopia symbol decorating our classrooms. Mel and I have stopped keeping Thanksgiving because of this association. (Micah 3, especially verses 6 & 7)

Love,

—Jean Colgrove

Dear Jean,

We are glad Shepherd's Voice Magazine is a blessing to you. We spend a lot of time in thought, study and prayer writing the articles. It is nice to see someone doing the same thing in reading them!

There certainly was a famine of the word of God between Malachi and the New Testament. The apocryphal books, especially 1 Maccabees, indicate that God was working among the people at times, but they also show people who were far away from God. Does Amos 8:11 refer to that time, the future time that Mr. Petersen mentioned or both? I don't know for sure. If I felt I needed to know, I would ask God to show me. If you read the New Testament to see how they used Old Testament prophecy, the almost always pulled out specific verses—even parts of verses—and said that the Spirit had shown them that a specific prophecy was applying at their time. Our Fall 2013 Article, *Need Prophets More than Prophecy*, addresses this issue.

If people are drawn away from God because of pagan practices mixed up with true practices, then they need to stop those things. The official Thanksgiving proclamations by our presidents that I have read do not mention the use of a cornucopia. They do honor the God of the Bible. I certainly did not have one at any Thanksgiving meal I have hosted. Simply because other people bring other religious symbols into a good attempt to honor God, does not invalidate those seeking to honor God. The "Feast of Dedication" or Hanukkah was not a commanded Feast of the Old Testament, but Jesus attended it in John 10:22. Yes, various non-

biblical elements have been added to that Feast. But it was a day commemorating the Jews physical deliverance by trust in God in difficult times. Jesus used the occasion to be in Jerusalem to explain He was not going to provide physical deliverance but spiritual deliverance. It can be a great time to honor God with friends and family who do not keep the biblical Feast days, but who will do so at Thanksgiving.

August 6, 2014

To Shepherd's Voice:

Just a quick note to let you know that I admire and appreciate the quality of your printed articles and the elegance of the fine paper on which they are printed—nothing cheap looking or cost-saving economy about it as many periodicals have done.

God gives the best. Also, I am grateful to my friends Kathy and David for introducing me to Shepherd's Voice. Do the "wicked men" in Psalm 141:1-4 and Proverb 2:12 refer to homosexuals?

—LSG

Dear LSG,

Thank you for your encouragement. SVM is the best quality we can produce for a modest cost. Now that the Internet has replaced many printed publications, it does not make sense to print a newsletter of the same quality that most people could print from the Internet on a home printer. There is still a place for an attractive publication that people just pick up and read away from a computer.



The Hebrew word for “wicked” in Psalm 141:4 is aw-ven, which is generally translated “wicked” or “wickedness”. It does not have any particular association with homosexuality. The word translated “froward” or “perverse” in Proverbs 2:12 is tah-pukah. The Theological Wordbook of the New Testament says: “Of its nine uses eight are in Proverbs (Deut 32:20). This substantive is always translated by the KJV as “froward” or “frowardness” except Prov 23:33 and in the RSV by “perverse, perverted, perverseness.” It is a sin connected mostly with the mouth (Prov 2:12; 16:30) and also with the heart (Prov 6:14); and the mind (Prov 23:33).” Again, there is no specific mention of homosexuality, though it does not exclude it.

The Hebrew qadesh clearly refers to homosexuals and is found in Deuteronomy 23:17, 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7 and Job 36:14. The Greek arsenokoites clearly has that meaning (1 Timothy 1:10) The Greek malakos is often translated that way in 1 Corinthians 6:9 The Greek kuon, which means “dog”, is apparently used figuratively for homosexuals in Philippians 3:2 and Revelation 22:15. There are other places where there is no specific word used, but the action is described: “If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination” (Leviticus 20:17).

The Bible clearly teaches that homosexual acts are sin. However, it does not teach that it is somehow greater than all other evils. The Old Testament gave it the same penalty as cursing God, adultery or striking one’s parents. All of these things occur far too often in our society. Many people who practice these sins have had horrible upbringings. They need to be shown the love of God (1 John 4:19), they need to repent, and they need God’s power to change their lives.

We Christians have plenty of work to do (Luke 10:2).

Hi Norman,

[Name withheld] from India.

I’ve read “divorce and remarriage” article

which helped me to understand what God wanted in a married life. Thanks for the article.

Now, I’m writing this question looking for answers in the Bible related to my family life. Please respond to me at the earliest as a fellow brother in Christ since I’m in dire need of getting an answer for this issue.

I’ve been married for the past 1.5 years. We both are believers, yet we didn’t have a peaceful life because of my wife’s mental disorder which is supposed to be ‘bipolar disorder’. We had many counseling sessions with pastors together and it got revealed in one of those counseling sessions to seek medical (psychiatric) help for her. Ours was an arranged marriage and the medical condition of the girl was not revealed to me before marriage by her parents or concerned people and I feel I was treacherously brought into this marriage. She had issues of going depressed and getting into very active state. She used to physically and verbally abuse me when not in her normal state (most of the time). I’m willing to take care of my wife if she agrees to go for psychiatric counseling and treatment. However she is telling she is normal and very adamant not to take medical help. Presently she has abandoned me for the past 1.5 months) to stay with her parents without informing me.

It is risky and dangerous to bring her back without proper treatment since many issues has already happened like taking me to the Police station, wrongly accusing me of killing her, her suicidal thoughts, verbal and physical abuse towards me.

I was always mentally, emotionally, spiritually tortured and physically abused sometimes. It is as if like I’m in a bondage with no freedom to live with her with her mental disorder untreated. With the help of my Pastor’s counseling here, I came to my senses not to bring her back until she agrees for treatment. However I couldn’t find any willingness or any move from my wives or her parent’s side to resolve the issue to move ahead regardless of many futile efforts from my side. We haven’t yet consummated due to many issues though we had some intimate times. I’m longing to have a family life but I feel I’m trapped and stuck with Bible telling

me not to divorce except on grounds of adultery or desertion by an unbeliever!!! Many counselors have already advised her to go for a psychiatric treatment, but she is adamant not to go for it. If she still persists not to go for treatment, do I really have a legitimate Biblical reason to divorce and remarry? Please guide me with your answers.

Regards

[Name Withheld]

Dear [Name Withheld],

Thank you for your letter. I sympathize with you and know that marriage trials of this nature are very heart-rending. I think it is similar to what Christ felt when his own followers turned away from Him. There is a tendency among Christians to say, “that sounds too awful, I don’t want to talk about—or read about it in a magazine!” Nevertheless, believers are commanded to deal with such issues (1 Corinthians 6:2-5).

First, let me say that there are two issues here:

1. How does the teaching of the Bible apply to your case?
2. What are the true facts of your case?

I believe I can give you a good presentation of the Biblical teaching on the subject. But because I do not know your wife, and because it is not likely she would trust a distant person whom you have contacted, I cannot verify the accuracy of the facts you stated. I hope they are true. In the many times I have spoken to others about marriage difficulties, sometimes an individual’s initial telling of the situation was very good, and other times very important facts had been left out!

I therefore encourage you to find believer(s) who know you, your wife and your families if possible, and let them hear both sides and determine the facts. Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 6:5 are examples of this. It is in your best interest to have someone do this for you, even if you are sure that your wife is nearly all the cause of the problem. Almost everybody who wants a divorce blames the other person—but only

some are right, most of the others are deceived and a few probably know they are lying. When a person blames their spouse for their divorce, but they are mostly at fault, they will usually continue to marry and divorce until they realize they are the problem. Whereas, people who get a divorce, but who are not mainly to blame, usually wait longer to remarry, but then stay married for life.

There is no free lunch! Any unjust person who “gets away with” a divorce usually suffers more in the future. A largely innocent spouse who ends up in a divorce is hurt, but is usually wiser from the experience and much better able to enter into a good marriage.

If you take this letter to your pastors or counselors, do they agree that it is an accurate statement of the facts without important omissions? Have they also told you to make changes in your life? Do any of them believe she may be troubled by demonic spirits?

Laws vary greatly throughout the world, but some might grant an annulment to your marriage because there was fraud involved—not telling you of her mental issues—and because it has not been consummated. There was fraud involved when Laban gave Leah to Jacob instead of Rachel, but since it was consummated, the marriage was held as valid (Genesis 29:23-27). Conversely, when Onan refused to consummate his marriage to Tamar, he was treated like one who refused to marry (Genesis 38:8-10).

The Old Testament teaches that a man may give his wife a “certificate of divorce” (Deuteronomy 24:1), except in certain cases (Deuteronomy 22:19, 29). God himself gave such a certificate to Israel (Jeremiah 3:8), even though He “hates divorce” (Malachi 2:16). Many people think Jesus changed the law regarding divorce in Matthew 5:32, but this is in a

section immediately prefixed by this statement:

*“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”* (Matthew 5:17-18).

Christ did not alter the law. In that same section, Christ shows that hating one’s brother without a cause is like murder and lusting after a woman is like adultery—but nobody claims He changed the law for judges to exact the physical death penalty for hate and lust. No, Christ was teaching the spirit of the law and what God wanted for us from the beginning. Christ taught:

*He said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery”* (Matthew 19:8-9).

When God instituted marriage, He never wanted any divorce, but because people sometimes have hard hearts, He knew it was better for them to formally divorce rather than live a lifetime of abuse or contention—or to simply walk away and live with someone else. Even today, the believer should do all he or she can to avoid divorce—they should do more than “their share”. But indeed, there are some who claim to be believers, but still have hard hearts. This same teaching is repeated again here, in slightly different words:

*He [Christ] said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” His disciples said to Him, “If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” But He said to them, “All cannot accept this saying, but*

*only those to whom it has been given”* (Matthew 19:8-11).

The disciples realized that this “no divorce” standard would be very difficult to achieve—so difficult that one might consider avoiding marriage altogether. Christ’s response is in complete harmony with what he said in Matthew 5. He is not implementing a new law, but he is expounding the spiritual ideal for those who are willing to accept it. Paul explains exactly how a believer should implement this:

*Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife. But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace* (1 Corinthians 7:10-15).

Paul explains the principle of temporary separation with the hope of reconciliation. When people blame their problems on their spouse, separation gives them a chance to see if their problems go away, or if they are still with them—and maybe they need to change themselves. Paul further explains that believers ought to be willing to live with unbelieving mates, as long as the unbelieving mates are willing to live with them. They may still be difficult to live with. Obviously, if a spouse simply leaves with no intent to return, the believer may divorce him or her. This is especially important if the believer has children and the desire to raise them in a two-parent family.

Just because an unbeliever does not leave the home does not mean he/she is willing to live with his/her

spouse. People who physically attack their spouses or attempt to have them prosecuted for crimes they did not commit are trying to get rid of their spouse and keep the family possessions—they are not willing to live together in peace. Also, a person may not be treated as a believer, even though they claim to be a believer. Matthew 18:15-17 explains that offenses should first be taken to the offender, then to some witnesses, then to the Church. If the offender will not hear the church, then he or she is to be treated as an unbeliever. If a spouse claiming to be a believer will not follow

the judgment of the Church (or someone chose to judge the case—1 Corinthians 6:5), then he or she is to be treated as an unbeliever.

If your letter is accurate, Mr. India, it appears that your wife does not want to live with you. She has departed. She has also made efforts that would have removed you from the household if she were successful. If you explain this to her, take witnesses to her and explain it to your church, and if she will not follow the words of your church—or if she utterly refuses to even listen to all of these steps—then I believe they should

agree to treat her like an unbeliever, and I believe the Scripture justifies a divorce.

May God grant you either reconciliation or a peaceful divorce—and, if God willing, the wisdom to find a new, good wife. Please note that the Bible contains many examples of arranged marriages, but it never commands them. Rather:

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh (Genesis 2:24).* 📖

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Please request using the email or mailing addresses listed on the inside cover.

*Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*  
(Deuteronomy 6:5)

We have read over those words many times. It's straight forward enough. It is an expectation God has of us, His children. In reality the above seems a formidable task. We know how much work and sacrifice it takes to love a mate, a parent, a child and even our neighbour. So, how do we love this great omniscient Being, this awesome Creator of the universe? It's hard to get one's mind around the fact He is our Father. The Israelites were not successful. And as we know saying "I love you" can be just an empty phrase. So the question is "How can we be successful when the Old Covenant Israelites were not?" In Jim Patterson's book, *Acts and the Epistles*, he mentions in explaining (I Peter 2:6-8):

"In the Church of God, Christ will become either precious or a rock of offense to the individual. If the believer learns that love is the bottom line in having a sustained and fruitful relationship to Him, not the love of principles or teachings, then there is no cause for him to stumble. This demonstrates the value that the believer places in his relationship to God and His people. It is easier to obey someone that you love, admire and appreciate, and those who know their relationship to God is precious." (p.197)

These words really struck a chord. "It is easier to obey someone that you love, admire, and appreciate, and those who know their relationship to God is precious." Then I was reading the first chapter of Colossians where Paul teaches the brethren how much they had to appreciate and be thankful for God's love for us. We need to ponder Colossians 1:12-14 which says, "Giving thanks unto the Father which has made us meet (suitable ready) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins..."



I believe we need to think on this relationship as a deeply personal one. That we can reach out at any time and our Father will be near....that He will take our hand in His. I remember vividly as a runaway teenager hitchhiking across Canada and the many times I held out my hand to the only Father I had at the time. It was an innocence on my part, an expectation of this great Being I knew was in the heavens. And He never did let me down, showing great love and mercy. I certainly did not do anything to deserve this attention. I didn't even acknowledge I was a sinner or that I needed to repent. He just knew I was a young girl who needed love and protection. One night I found myself left on a dark mountain highway far from the nearest town; I was more than a little scared and the tears ran down my cheeks unchecked. I had no one but my Father in heaven. He saw my tears. In short order I was picked up by an RCMP officer who took pity upon me and found me a warm room and food. I know that God sent that officer. I am alive and well today because my heavenly Father saved my life on more than one occasion. He was and is precious to me and the only One who walked with me through those difficult years.

*Set your affection on things above*  
(Colossians 3:2).

We also need to think on our calling. Our calling was just the beginning of a mammoth miracle... the most important miracle of our life. It's really something to realize that the Spirit Being who rules over this whole earth loves you and finds you precious...that we are the apple of His eye. I still shake my head when I think of that period of my life. I still find it the most electrifying, most exhilarating time of my adult life. I knew, just like I did when I was travelling alone on the highway that He would never leave me alone now on this new path He had set me on. That of everyone I had ever known in my short life that He was the only One I could truly rely on... that I could trust. No one else had ever loved me the way my heavenly Father had or does. What a wonderful sense of security and warmth that gave me.

My heavenly Father knew I could make it with His help. He was very selective in His choosing each one of us. Remember David's calling. Let's read how particular and how much trouble God took in the choosing of

this young man. Don't you think He went to as much trouble when He chose you or me? Do you think He remembered that frightened lonely girl on the highway?

*Then he (Samuel) consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice. So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before Him!" But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains the youngest, "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here." So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!" Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward!" (1 Samuel 16:5-13).*

Can you imagine God going through that same process when He decided to call you! God took David under His wing. He takes us under His wing! Sometimes we take so much for granted. To appreciate our Father in heaven we need to give value and acknowledgement for what He has done for us. Do we appreciate what He has created for our pleasure? Do we find joy in smelling a flower, or examining the exquisite design in the leaf of a plant or tree, or a lovely sunset, the miraculous smile of a baby? Do we acknowledge and give thanks to our Father for all that we enjoy each day, the very air we breathe or do we just get up each day

taking life and all we enjoy for granted. David knew His Father was there for him from that moment forward. David, through God's Spirit had a knowing... deep down David knew that God would be there for him in every circumstance. Read the book of Psalms to see how much David appreciated his Father in heaven, giving thanks and praise to Him daily. He never took anything for granted, so he never lost sight of his appreciation and love for his heavenly Father. He never lost sight of how much he needed his Father. And we know God said David was a man after His own heart. Even David wondered why God was interested in him so he asked the question:

*What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, (Psalms 8:4-6).*

We can see in the following verses how much David relied on and loved God.

*I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustained me (Psalms 3:5).*

*I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety (Psalms 4:8).*

*But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; In fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple (Psalms 5:7).*

We must think on how God has always been there for us through each and every trial and joy. All we need to read now is Psalm 23. Phillip Keller writes in his book *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*:

"Our view of Him is often too small—too cramped—too provincial—too human. And because it is we feel unwilling to allow Him to have authority or control—much less outright ownership of our lives. .... So when the simple—though sublime—statement is made by a man or woman that "The Lord is my Shepherd" it immediately implies a profound yet practical working relationship between a human being and his Maker. It links a

lump of common clay to divine destiny—it means a mere mortal becomes the cherished object of divine diligence."

Keller continues to say that "this thought alone should stir my spirit, quicken my own sense of awareness, and lend enormous dignity to myself as an individual. To think that God in Christ is deeply concerned about me as a particular person immediately gives great purpose and enormous meaning to my short sojourn on this planet." (p.2,3) We could follow Keller's advice when he states, "So if the Lord is my Shepherd I should know something of His character and understand something of His ability. To meditate on this I frequently go out at night to walk alone under the stars and remind myself of His majesty and might. Looking up at the star studded sky I remember that at least 250,000,000 x 250,000,000 such bodies—each larger than our sun, one of the smallest of the stars, have been scattered across the vast spaces of the universe by His hand. ...all this is a bit humbling. It drains the "ego" from a man and puts things in proper perspective. It makes me see myself as a mere mite of material in an enormous universe. ...yet the staggering fact remains that Christ the Creator...deigns to call Himself my Shepherd and invites me to consider myself His sheep—His special object of affection and attention." (p 4,5)

David knew from firsthand experience that the lot in life of any particular sheep depended on the type of man who owned it. Some men were gentle, kind, intelligent, brave, and selfless in their devotion to their stock. Others were not. When we see our Lord and Saviour in this light...in us having a personal relationship with Him as our Shepherd (the one who gave His life for us) we can appreciate that kind of love and care. So with this in mind let us learn to appreciate the Lord our Shepherd as precious and to love Him with all our heart, soul and mind. 🐏

## How Does the Bible Define a Believer?

One must be very careful when one asks the question, “What does the Bible give as minimum requirements to be considered a believer?” It is very different from asking, “What is the minimum I can do to be saved?” Notice:

*But He [Jesus] answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4). But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing (James 1:4).*

*Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin (James 4:17).*

Christianity is not about living up to some minimum standard to be in a club. It is about a lifetime commitment to live according to the purpose for which God has made us. We need to pray daily for Christ to work in our lives, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit that purpose will be accomplished. When we sin, the solution is not to convince ourselves that our sin “won’t prevent us from being saved”, but to repent of the sin and to be cleansed of it. (1 John 1:8-9)

But we have a very different situation when it comes to determining whether or not to treat another person as a believer. We cannot know for sure—we cannot get into their minds and hearts as Christ can. Others may not know what we know. Some people are blind to certain truths and they are not guilty of sin when transgressed laws are unknown to them. (John 9:41) Indeed, most of the New Testament epistles are

This article is mostly Scriptures, and indeed it should be, as we want to know what the Bible says on this subject. The author believes it contains nearly all of the relevant scriptures, but would appreciate letters from readers pointing out relevant ones he missed. The purpose is not to deal with every biblical admonition to mankind to do or to refrain from something, but to cite those Scriptures which show clues to who we should and should not consider a believer.

correction to various groups and individuals, but very few people are specifically designated “unbelievers” due to their beliefs or actions. Even when the risen Christ dictates letters to seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, He tells each person to repent of their sins, but does not call any church a “false church” or call anyone an “unbeliever” (though some are “dead” or “lukewarm”). So while we ourselves are striving to live by every word of God, we cannot expect that every other believer will have as much knowledge as we do or the same spiritual strength to obey. We cannot take scriptures like this out of context:

*To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isaiah 8:20).*

To some people, that verse means all they need do is find one error in someone’s doctrine and they can be classified an unbeliever. But there are dozens of examples in the New Testament where people are gently corrected without being told they are unbelievers.

For example:

*Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation. But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully (2 Corinthians 9:5-6).*

Paul does not cite Isaiah 8:20 and say, “Coveting is a violation of the 10 commandments and if he catches anyone coveting, they are out of the church!” No, the context of what Isaiah was talking about is in the previous verse. If people are practicing demonism—denying God—then there is no light in them:

*And when they say to you, “Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,” should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? (Isaiah 8:19).*

Sometimes, people cite verses showing that Christ can be worshiped in vain, when people keep traditions of men rather than the commands of God:

*“‘And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men -- the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.” He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition” (Mark 7:7-9).*

It is obviously a sin to let man's traditions override God's commandments, but these verses do not make such a person suddenly an unbeliever. When Peter and Barnabas followed the Jewish tradition of not eating with Gentiles, who are also made in the image of God, Paul told them they were sinning, but did not declare them unbelievers. (Gal 2:11-14)

### When We Must Determine Who Is a Believer

The Bible generally tells us to "judge not, that you not be judged," (Matthew 7:1). In general, we do not need to go about deciding whether we think each professing Christian is a believer or not. But there are times the Bible commands us to do certain things based upon whether or not someone is or is not a believer. Then we must make a determination to decide what we will do:

*Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14).*

*Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea (Acts 11:29).*

*Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10).*

*Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?... But brother goes to law against brother; and that before unbelievers! (1 Corinthians 6:1,6)*

*We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love*

*his brother abides in death.... By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3:14, 16).*

In a legally binding business arrangement with others, the Bible tells us not to be "unequally yoked with unbelievers". We must decide for our own use the believer status of the person with whom we are considering becoming a partner.

Similarly, when we follow the commands to provide for the physical needs of brethren or to lay down our lives for them, we might want to decide whether or not they are believers. If we are in a dispute with a believer, we should go to the Church—not the civil courts. Also, in verses below, there are numerous commands to avoid false teachers, many of which are clearly unbelievers. Jude 1:22 teaches us to "make a distinction."

All of these are very real circumstances that often occur some time in the life of a believer.

### Most Verses: Believe Jesus is the Messiah

By far the most common statement in the scriptures regarding what makes a person recognizable as a believer is whether they accept Jesus as the Messiah who came in the flesh. We found twelve verses below and bolded the parts that refer to this concept.

*"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the*

*name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:16-18).*

*"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36).*

*Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent" (John 6:28,29).*

*"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24).*

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26).*

*That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9).*

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for **he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him** (Hebrews 11:6).

Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. **Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also** (1 John 2:22-23).

By this you know the Spirit of God: **Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh**

*is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world (1 John 4:2-3).*

*Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God (1 John 4:15).*

*Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him (1 John 5:1).*

*For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist... Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds (2 John 1:7, 9-11).*



### Have the Holy Spirit

In addition to believing that Jesus is the Christ, a believer would have the Holy Spirit. That would normally occur after one is baptized (Acts 2:38), but in the case of John the Baptist, Cornelius' household and others, God gave His Spirit before baptism (Luke 1:15; Acts 10:44-48). We mention this to acknowledge that there might be some believers who have not been baptized. But any

believer who understands baptism would certainly want to be baptized, as was Jesus and also Cornelius' household **after** they received the Holy Spirit.

*But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.... But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you (Romans 8:9, 11).*

*Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3).*

*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame (Hebrews 6:4-6).*

### Love the Brethren

The Apostle John clearly wrote that a person who hates or refuses to love his brethren is in darkness and death.

*He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now (1 John 2:9).*

*We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death (1 John 3:14).*

*If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? (1 John 4:20).*

### Accept Authority of the Brethren

Numerous scriptures give the church—the body of believers—authority to make decisions in regard to the members and how they interact with each other. A person who disregards this authority is to be **treated as** an unbeliever. We cannot always know each person's heart, but we can see that they are not following the judgment of their congregation and treat them accordingly.

*"And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector" (Matthew 18:17).*

*It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!... In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with My spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 5:1,4-5).*

*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret (Ephesians 5:11-12).*

*And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed (2 Thessalonians 3:14).*



*For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries (Hebrews 10:26-27).*

### Avoid False Teachers

One might think that all false teachers are unbelievers, but that is not always the case. The Bible mentions a number of false doctrines taught by people who were ignorant or sinful, but who were otherwise regarded as believers. For example, those who were teaching denominationalism (1 Corinthians 1:9-15; 3:3-9) were called “carnal” by Paul, but not “unbelievers”. In Jude 1:23, we are told to make a distinction between false teachers that can be “plucked out of the fire” and those who can’t. Certainly, there are many false teachers who are unbelievers. And even those who are confused believers, if they have been corrected by the church, according to Matthew 18:19, should be treated like unbelievers if they do not repent of their ways. Fortunately, there are many scriptures that teach us how to recognize false teachers.

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly **they are ravenous wolves**. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them” (Matthew 7:15-20).

A good teacher will bear good fruit. We can see the effect of his teaching

on his family, friends, congregation and remote students. We know the fruits of the spirit and spiritual gifts (Galatians 5:22-23, 1 Corinthians 12-14). In the rest of the scriptures about false teachers, there is a common thread that is found in nearly all of them: False teachers try to draw followers away after themselves for economic rewards, power and other carnal benefits. This concept is in **boldface**, below:

*“For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves” (Acts 20:29-30).*

*Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple (Romans 16:17-18).*

*For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you (1 Corinthians 11:19).*

But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those **who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are** in the things of which they boast. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ... For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face (2 Corinthians 11:12-13, 20).

*Traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than*

*lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, <sup>7</sup> always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (2 Timothy 3:4-7).*

*If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself (1 Timothy 6:3-5).*

*For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain (Titus 1:10-11).*

*Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned (Titus 3:10-11).*

*But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies [divisions], even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they*

*will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber (2 Peter 2:1-3).*

*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8-9).*

The above verse is included because it is nearly always false teachers who claim that their church doctrine is without error or that they are personally without sin.

*I wrote to the church, but Diotrefes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church (3 John 1:9-10).*

*But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh (Jude 1:17-23).*

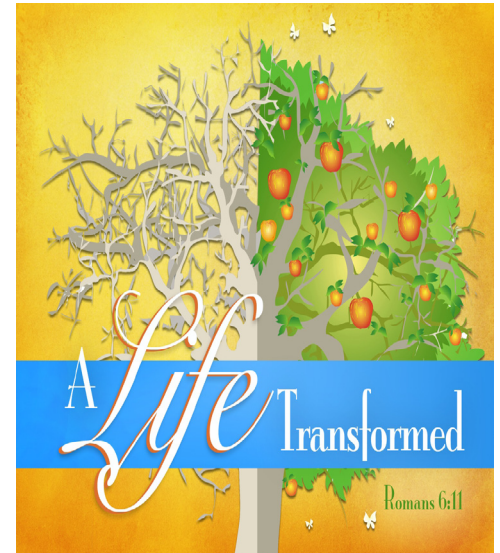
Do we need to try to stop everyone who is teaching error or who is not part of what we understand to be the true church?:

*Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us." But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is on our side. For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward. But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea" (Mark 9:38-42).*

We must not cause little ones to stumble by fighting among Christians, causing them to think that there is no peace there. We must not compromise our truth and become like them, but we do not need to cause little ones to stumble. This does not mean that all religious teachers are equal or doing the same job. Christ (not us) will sort them out eventually:

*"He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. Either make*

*the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit" (Matthew 12:30-33).*



### Conclusion

And we are back to looking at fruit again! Certainly, some professing Christians have a name only: they do not pray, read the Bible, attend any services or let their Christian understanding affect their day-to-day life. At the opposite extreme are Christians who have given up everything to live by the truth as they understand it, to help the poor, to serve in foreign missions, to make Bibles available to the world, to preach the gospel, etc. Many have been persecuted or killed in that process. The Bible does not contain some long list of numerous things that a person must believe or do to become a believer. There are examples of quick conversions in the Bible: the thief on the cross Luke 23:40-43, the Ethiopian treasurer (Acts 8:27-39) and the Roman jailor and his family (Acts 16:29-34). But once converted, everyone is responsible for surrendering their life to Christ and living by "every word of God." 📖

## All For One; One For All

*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing; even life for evermore (Psalm 133:1-3 A Song of degrees of David).*



A *United Front* best describes the events of the Sabbath of August 2, 2014, when brethren of the Active Bible Church of God in Chicago (“ABCOG”) and Church of God in Downers Grove (“COGDG”) joined forces with the brethren of the Chicagoland Church of God (“CCOG”) in a much-anticipated mini reunion.

The historic area of downtown Naperville, Illinois was the venue for the linkup organized and hosted by the CCOG and the COGDG. Up to 40 members of all three congregations were in attendance, with participants traveling from various parts of Aurora, Chicago, Downers Grove, Plainfield and other neighbouring communities to join their Naperville brethren.

Pastor Ken Svehla of COGDG commenced the day's activities with a thought-provoking bible study session and lead discussions around the views of Steven Collins' article: *10 Tribes of Israel Found* assessing how well they match with the descriptions and characteristics of Revelation 2 and 3.

During the main part of the Sabbath service, Pastor Ray Curtis of ABCOG delivered an engaging and challenging sermon entitled *Are We Marked Grass or Signed Saints?*

During his presentation Pastor Curtis set out to refute the claim: *“Has the Church Lost Its Moral Compass?”* In doing so, he commenced his presentation with Isaiah 40:1-8 and Exodus 31:13-17 and challenged the

audience to decide on a choice—whether to be “faded grass” according to Isaiah or “signed saints of God” identified through keeping of His Sabbaths and commandments as recorded in Exodus. Pastor Curtis highlighted similarities between the fall of Adam and Eve and the demise of Israel both of which resulted from doubts in God and trust in Satan. He was resolute in emphasizing that we should pray for peace and truth as the true Church of God endeavours to carry out its biblical mandate set by Jesus:

*“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:19-20).*

Psalm 133 is known as the psalm of unity and undoubtedly not

coincidence that the three verses have the number of divine completeness and perfect witness and the ABCOG, COGDG and CCOG set out to make that a reality. Selah!

### Join us for Sabbath Services:

- **Active Bible Church of God** typically holds services at the Hyde Park University Church; 5655 S. University Chicago, IL 60637. Bible Study 10:15-11:25 Worship Service 11:30-until. Also visit their [Facebook Page](#) or [YouTube Channel](#) for more information.
- **Chicagoland Church of God and Church of God Downers Grove**—now a combined group meets at the Naperville Women's Club—14 S Washington St, Naperville, IL 60540—and hold their services at 12:30pm. Visit the [COGDG](#) or [CCOG](#) websites or contact Jim Patterson for more information. [📍](#)



# *Love* is More Important Than Biblical Interpretation

What are the most pressing situations in your world right now? Here are three of mine.

- The chaos in the world can be exhausting to watch.
- The deteriorating world economy puts financial pressure on my family and friends.
- Some of my friends are experiencing serious personal trials.

This world needs the love of God. This world needs the disciples of Christ to exhibit the true sign of His discipleship—found in John 13:34-35.

## Biblical Discussions

As I watch the landscape in religion (including among the Church of God movement), I am concerned that too many people are allowing their Bible interpretations about knowledge to affect the way they deal with people.

There just seems to be more emphasis on Bible interpretations than on the way people deal with each other.

From my perspective, one of the foundational flaws in discussions (including religious discussions) is when people dogmatically state their ideas, opinions and interpretations as facts or truth.

I believe this error is magnified when people state their ideas, opinions and interpretations as speaking for God.

## Conviction and Compassion

One of my favorite expressions, which I periodically use in sermons, is the concept of having “conviction and compassion.” I believe people should have strong convictions – and the compassion to deal with people who have different convictions.

But placing compassion above conviction is difficult. Here are two problems.

First, some people believe they have a special assignment from God and thereby rationalize that they have dispensation to place conviction over compassion.

Some people claim to be prophets (or special messengers with other religious-sounding titles) who speak for God.

Such people generally believe that expressing the proper knowledge (including doctrine) is so important that the receivers of the knowledge need to hear what is true -- even if it makes them mad or sad.

Second, even when people believe compassion is more important than conviction, they make mistakes in dealing with other people.

## Interpreting is Good

It is my perspective that all people interpret Scripture, and it is my hope that people will do it wisely. Consider the following eight statements.

- Many people in this world claim to use the Bible as their guide.
- Those who use the Bible as their guide interpret Scripture.
- No two people have exactly the same knowledge. You know things that other people don't know and they know things that you don't know.
- The Bible says people are judged based on what they know (John 12:47,48; James 4:17).
- Learning from other people is wise.
- Hearing the interpretation of wise people is edifying.
- Hearing the interpretation of foolish people or prideful people can be viewed as a waste of time.
- People should seek to be the master of their time.

## What about Doctrine?

Someone could ask: With all this talk about interpretation, isn't biblical doctrine important? Absolutely.

Here are three scriptures that reveal the importance of doctrine.

*“And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men”* (Mark 7:7).



*If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself” (1 Timothy 6:3-5).*

*“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him” (2 John 1:9-10).*

It is my perspective that the following two concepts are important.

- People need to be careful when they seek to promote their interpretation as biblical doctrine.
- People need to be careful when they seek to correct other people for having a different interpretation of doctrine.

### What About Heresy?

Someone could ask: With all this talk about interpretation, is there not still such a thing as heresy? Absolutely.

In the King James Version of the Bible there are two Greek words for the subject of heresy. The Greek word *hairetikos* is used one time and is translated “heretic.” The Greek word *hairesis* is translated “sect” (five times), “heresies” (one time) and “heresy” (one time).

According to an article in Integrity Magazine (Vol. 5, No. 11, pp. 164-165), heresy is commonly misunderstood.

It said: “Since the factious man (*hairetikos*) in the KJV is called a ‘heretic’ -- a word subject to misunderstanding -- we should look carefully at what this term denotes. The root from which it comes means ‘to choose,’ and a ‘heretic’ is one who makes a choice. In the Bible a *hairesis* is a body of people built around the same choice; hence a sect or party. Although the English word heresy is associated with the one who holds an unorthodox doctrine, this meaning is not found in the Bible. Even in 2 Peter 2:1 (the only passage in which the RSV used the word) it does not seem to denote unorthodox doctrine.

“The heresies (factions) in 1 Corinthians 11:19 result from separatists who do not recognize the inherent oneness of the body. The original word is properly rendered ‘party spirit’ in Gal. 5:20. The Biblical usage emphasizes the evil of dividing the body. Therefore the ‘factious’ man in Tit. 3:10 is one who creates division by the manner in which he holds his theological opinions, even though those opinions may not be actually ‘heretical’ in the modern sense ... So

the word at this stage had nothing to do with orthodoxy of teaching.”

It is my perspective that the following two concepts are important.

- People need to be careful when they attribute another person’s interpretation as heresy.

- People need to be careful when they seek to correct another person because they categorize his interpretation as heresy.

### Be a Buyer

There is a famous expression showing a good approach when shopping: “*I don’t want to be sold items; I prefer to buy items.*”

I recommend you apply that principle to your religious discussions.

- Don’t let pushy people try to sell you on their knowledge.
- You are a buyer (seeker) of knowledge.
- If some pushy and rude religious salesmen seek to push their product (their interpretations) on you, be the master of your time. Resist their pushy approach.
- If you want to seek someone’s interpretation, approach him and see what he has to offer.
- If you are not happy with his product (the information or the tone of his interpretation), end the discussion.

### Notice the Tone

Someone could ask: How much evaluation should I place on the tone of a pushy person’s interpretation?

My answer: That’s up to you. Personally, I place a lot of value on the tone.

Someone could ask: How quickly should I withdraw from a person with a presumptuous tone?

My answer: That’s your choice. If someone is trying to dogmatically sell (push) his interpretation to me, I may end the conversation rather quickly.

If I am trying to buy (seek) his interpretation, I am more likely to put up with his questionable tone for a while.

Generally, I prefer to avoid spending extensive time listening to a presumptuous person who dogmatically expresses his interpretation as undeniable truth.

### Famous Misapplication

One of the greatest misapplications of the Scripture is how people use the beautiful words of Christ’s message to the seven congregations in Revelation 2-3.

My next comment would be humorous if it were not so sad. When dozens of church groups pompously brag about having the attitude of the Philadelphia congregation (Revelation 3:7-13), they are loudly expressing the attitude of the Laodicean congregation (verses 14-22).

John quoted Jesus as saying, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches” (Revelation 3:13, 22). Let’s explore that a little further.

### Do Not Be Controlled

It is my perspective that civil government and church government generally seek to control other people. I believe that is the type of wrong leadership that Jesus described in Matthew 20:25 and Luke 22:25.

I mentioned earlier how some religious people claim to speak for God. Unfortunately, this action is often an attempt to control people.

Allow me to give you my perspective about phrases that can be used by religious people (inadvertently or deliberately) to control people.

- “*He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches.*”

This phrase can be used to try to intimidate you into thinking the other person has knowledge that is superior to yours. He may present himself as having a spiritual perception that you can only hope to have some day.

- “This is so simple.”

Did he inadvertently call you a moron or is he deliberately insulting you?

- “Everybody should understand this.”

Are you a sucker for peer pressure?

- “There is no question about this.”

Really? We can’t even ask questions about this interpretation? Besides, why would we want to ask a question of a prideful know-it-all?

- “I believe only what I read in the Bible.”

Did he inadvertently imply that you don’t believe in the Bible? Did he inadvertently imply that he knows so much more about the Bible than you do?

- “People who believe such things are rejecting the faith that was once delivered” (a phrase in Jude 4).

Does the critic’s interpretation of the “faith that was once delivered” reflect God’s absolute perspective? Is he sure? Or does God view the critic as someone seeking to divide the Body of Christ?

- “People who believe such things are not in covenant with God.”

Such proclaimers may be contradicting Mark 9:38-40.

- “People who believe such things are not converted.”

Such proclaimers may be contradicting 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.

- “People who believe such things are not being called now.”

Such proclaimers may be contradicting John 6:44.

- “People who believe such things have rejected Jesus Christ as their Savior.”

Such proclaimers may be contradicting 2 Timothy 2:19.

- “People who believe such things have never had the Spirit of God.”

Such proclaimers may be contradicting Romans 8:14-16.“

People who believe such things have rejected the Spirit of God.”

Such proclaimers may be violating Matthew 12:31-32.

### How to Respond

Someone could ask: How should I respond to people who make some of the statements listed above?

My answer: Consider Proverbs 26:4-5 and Galatians 6:1.

- According to Proverbs 26:4, there are times to avoid descending to their foolishness.

Someone could ask: If I don’t respond, won’t these types of people conclude that they are right?

My answer: If they are not willing to identify their ideas as interpretations, they already “know” they are right.

Someone could ask: If I don’t respond, won’t those types of people pass along bad information about me?

My answer: Possibly. But understand that people are already passing along false information about you.

Seeking to clarify false information about yourself is like chasing a pillowful of released feathers in the wind.

- According to Proverbs 26:5, there are times to make a statement that exposes their wrong information or their wrong approach.

If the person regrets his foolishness (wrong information and wrong approach), you might be able to enter into a good conversation. If the person does not regret his foolishness (wrong information and wrong approach), I recommend that you do not waste your time.

- According to Galatians 6:1, people can consider reaching out to help, but they should not feel compelled to intervene. And, if a person does choose to reach out to help, it should be done in the spirit of meekness.



### Love Trumps Knowledge

Let’s conclude with two scriptures.

In Romans 14:1, the apostle Paul described the general relationship between people who are considered strong in the faith and those who are considered weak in the faith:

*Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things* (Romans 14:1).

In 1 Corinthians 13:2 Paul mentioned the important characteristics of prophecy, mysteries, knowledge and faith. Then he noted the superiority of love:

*And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing* (1 Corinthians 13:2).

*Dave Havir is Pastor of the Church of God Big Sandy, TX*

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