

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

*Pleading for a complete return to Christianity  
as it was in the beginning*

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## A GOOD QUESTION

On the radio this morning it was announced that the Mormon Church is to build a large Temple in Preston, and this, apparently, has caused great resentment from the other religious denominations in the locality. The basis of complaint is that Mormons are not perceived to be Christians; because they allegedly do not give Christ His proper place, and are governed by the Book of Mormon rather than the Bible. Predictably, a representative of the Mormon Church was interviewed and indignantly repudiated the inference that Mormons are not Christians. Indeed he said that Mormons are *the true* Christians. This obviously constitutes an interesting question. Are Mormons Christians? What constitutes a Christian? Is, for instance, the Pope a Christian; or is the Queen a Christian; or the Archbishop of Canterbury? Are Roman Catholics Christians, or Methodists, or Quakers; or Christadelphians; or Seventh-day Adventists; or Jehovah's Witnesses Christians; etc. etc? The Pope certainly regards himself as a Christian (indeed the world's most prominent Christian) and millions of Roman Catholics share this view. Many Protestants, however, might regard the Pope as the "anti-Christ" and view all the paraphernalia of Roman Catholicism with great abhorrence. Religious animosity and bigotry have been with us for 2,000 years with much bloodshed, persecution and burning at the stake. Clearly, views on this subject differ over a wide scale. What is a Christian? How can we know? Can we be sure? Where can we find out?

### SPARSE MENTION

Our ONLY source of information is the Bible, and particularly the N.T. All other sources are completely invalid. The Book of Mormon, for instance, can easily be shown to be an uninspired and fraudulent document. It should be stated at the very outset that although the term "Christian" is very common currency in the vocabulary of the religious world today (i.e. "Christian" ethics; "Christian" principles; "Christian" beliefs, etc.) it was not so in N.T. times.

The origin of the term "Christian" is most uncertain although I suppose it seems logical that followers of Christ should end up being called "Christ-ians". Logical or not, Paul never ever referred to "Christians" in all his writings. Indeed, the term "Christian" occurs only three times in the entire N.T.: the first instance of which is when Luke says that "**the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch**" (Acts 11:26). Remarkably, this development was some fourteen years after the birth of the Church, and fourteen seems a very long time for the Church to manage without the term. Luke does not tell us who decided to give the disciples this name: whether by the Church

itself; or by those outwith the Church. Prof. Barclay and others believed the term was given by those *outside* the Church, as a nick-name or derogatory title. W.E. Vine concurs, and adds that this is implied (in the second mention of the term, in Acts 26:28) when Agrippa says to Paul "**Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian**". Vine also believes that this element is still visible in the third occurrence of the term (1 Peter 4:16) when Peter says that the disciples should not suffer as murderers, thieves, or evildoers, but if called upon to suffer as "**Christians**" they should glorify God in this behalf.

It is also of interest to note that just as Paul never mentioned Christians, although he had unlimited opportunity to do so, neither did Jude, nor James, nor John. The apostles always wrote to "them sanctified and called to be saints"; or "my little children"; or "my beloved"; or "brethren"; and even Peter wrote not to "fellow Christians" but to "the elect" and to "those who have obtained like faith". Although nothing conclusive is claimed for this apparent oddity it does seem to show that "Christian" was not in common usage in the Church even some fifty years after the inception of the term at Antioch.

### WHAT THEN IS A CHRISTIAN?

Ask your neighbour, or "the man in the street", the above question and you can expect various shades of opinion. Some will say that a Christian is a **good person**, one who is kind and does good deeds. Certainly we would expect Christians to do good deeds, but there are many who do good deeds who are not even religious, let alone Christian. Some of the greatest philanthropists were atheists or agnostics. It is quite possible to love our fellow-man, alleviate pain and poverty, from a purely humanitarian stand-point, without any reference whatsoever to Christianity. In recent times we have seen many "show-business" personalities and "pop-groups" amass vast sums for charitable purposes without wanting anything whatsoever to do with Christianity. And so a Christian is much more than someone who tries to do good.

Then there are those who define a Christian as one who believes in Jesus Christ. This, again, is obviously true, but there must be millions in this world who have an intellectual belief in Christ but have no desire to be Christians, or to commit their lives to His service. Even the demons believe, says James, but they tremble. (2:19). Many others believe, but, for reasons of their own, would never acknowledge it: e.g. John says (12:42) "**Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue**" Thus the Chief Rulers were believers in Christ but kept quiet about it. And "**Joseph was a disciple but secretly.**" (John 19:38). Clearly, more than belief is called for.

Then there are those much nearer the mark, who would say that a Christian is one who wants to **follow the teachings of Christ**. Here again, however, there are those who see wisdom in the teachings of Jesus, and take advantage of that wisdom, without ever wishing to be Christians or to commit their lives to the Lord's service. But Christ calls for His disciples to follow Him **personally** (not just admire His words of wisdom) and commit themselves to His service, not only here but also in the hereafter. Or, to coin a much hackneyed and misunderstood phrase, to accept Jesus Christ as one's own "personal" Saviour.

Clearly, all Roman Catholics, Protestants and cults like Mormons and J.W.'s, would all claim to be followers of Christ, and thus would all claim to be Christians. But can they all be Christians? Protestants would never become Catholics and vice versa: J.W.'s would never become Mormons or vice versa: and so they can't all be following Jesus

and His word. *Logically*, therefore, it would seem that they can't all be correct in their claim to be Christians.

### FAMOUS LAST WORDS

There are those, of course, who insist on being Christians on their own terms and conditions, or, indeed, upon no conditions at all. We have all heard those who say, "I never go to Church but I never do anybody any harm; I pay my way, and am as good a Christian as any Church-goer, probably better". There are variations to this theme but it's not uncommon for people to stipulate to God the conditions upon which they shall count themselves as Christians, whereas aspiring Christians must hear the gospel of Christ, repent of their previous life-style and resolve to follow the teachings of Christ and His inspired apostles. They must also be baptised (immersed) for the remission of sins, and rise to walk in newness of life. Thereafter, they must worship God through Christ, and walk the narrow way in a manner well-pleasing to God. All of this is *ordained of God* and not open to negotiation. Nor are there any special arrangements for any particular persons, such as Kings, Queens, Presidents or Popes. The gospel is "for every creature" on precisely an equal basis.

The final instructions of Jesus to His apostles were, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you . . ." (Matt. 28:19). This, then, was how Christians *were to be made*. The nations were to be taught and baptised; and then taught again, to observe all the things Jesus had commanded His apostles. Mark's rendering of the same commission is, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15). Clearly, this was the God-given way in which the nations were to become Christians and be saved. The apostles were to preach the gospel and baptise the converts (in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and thereafter teach them the commandments of Jesus: i.e. those "who believed and were baptised would be saved." One would imagine that this was quite clear and easily understood, but in correspondence recently I was informed that this sequence of events was quite mistaken and that Jesus should have said, "he that believeth is saved and may be baptised if he feels the need." I had to inform my correspondent that we can be quite sure that Jesus knew exactly what He was saying, and it is a serious presumption for us to correct Him. If Jesus said, "he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" how can we possibly dare to say, "he that believeth is saved, and can be baptised later if it is considered desirable." Thousands were converted in N.T. times and not one of them, it seems, ever challenged the *modus operandi* of their salvation, as we shall see in the next section.

### N.T. EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION

In discussing how people become Christians, the N.T. would seem the logical place to go, and, indeed, the Book of Acts contains numerous actual examples for our guidance. The Acts, of course contains a history of where, when and how the Church began and *on what basis* men and women were allowed entry. Let us see what we can learn from these examples?

**ACTS 2.** On Pentecost when Peter preached to the crowds (as per the commission given by Jesus) he convicted them of their sins and their murder of the Messias. To their anguished cry of "What shall we do"? Peter commanded them to "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit . . ." ("Belief" in Christ is not mentioned by Peter but clearly assumed. He gives them the next steps in the "saving" process: i.e.

repentance and baptism). We notice here that, according to Peter, baptism *is for the remission of sins*. 3000 in the crowd responded to the gospel, and, far from taking issue with Peter on baptism. **"They gladly received his word, and were baptised."**

**ACTS 8.** When Philip the evangelist preached to the Samaritans, we read that, **"When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the K. of G. and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women."** (v.12)

**ACTS 8.** Philip also preached to the Ethiopian eunuch (who had been reading Is. 53.) and **"Philip began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went their way they came unto a certain water and the eunuch said, See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptised."** From this we see that "preaching Jesus" included baptism. We also notice that the eunuch did not argue with Philip, and say "Who can force me to be baptised?" but rather, "Who can stop me?"

**ACTS 9.** Paul's own conversion. After being struck blind, "trembling and astonished", Paul spent the next three days in prayer and fasting until Ananias arrived. Ananias did not say that Paul was now a Christian, but rather, **"Why tarriest thou, Arise and be baptised and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord"**. Clearly, notwithstanding Paul's recent personal conversation with Jesus, and his 3 days of prayer and fasting, *he was still in his sins* and thus was instructed to **"wash away thy sins"** in baptism.

**ACTS 10.** The conversion of the first Gentiles: Cornelius and his family. Notwithstanding the fact that Cornelius and his family had just been baptised in the Holy Spirit, Peter, recovering from his astonishment, asked, **"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised (Which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?). And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord."** There is no mention of anyone trying to forbid water.

**ACTS 16.** Paul and Silas describe their meeting with Lydia at Philippi on their second missionary journey. **"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptised, and her household, she besought us saying, If ye have judged me faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there."**

**ACTS 16.** Conversion of the Jailer. Rescued from his suicide attempt, the jailer asked, **"Sirs, what must I do to be saved"**? Paul replied, **"Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved."** This heathen man had to be enlightened and so **"Paul spoke unto him the word of the Lord and to all that were in the house."** The outcome? **"Then he (the jailer) took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptised, he and all his, straightway."** And so the jailer, and those who heard the gospel, believed and were baptised the selfsame hour of the night.

**ACTS 18.** The Corinthians. On Paul's second missionary journey he preached at Corinth ". . . and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptised."

**ACTS 19.** Tells of Paul's discovery in Ephesus of brethren who, although having already been baptised with John's baptism, were quite unaware of Christ's baptism, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Paul taught them accordingly **"And when they heard this they were baptised in the name of the Lord."**

These, then, comprise virtually all the conversions mentioned in the Acts and show how the apostles *understood*, and *executed*, the commission given to them by Jesus (mentioned previously). As can readily be seen, *all* the conversions followed *exactly a similar pattern*; i.e. men and women had the gospel preached to them. Those who believed were called upon to repent and to be baptised. We can understand why

converts should repent, but why should they need to be baptised? Christ's baptism, like John's, was for the remission of sins. This was how people became Christians in N.T. times, and is, therefore, precisely how people must become Christians today. Thus, when we ask ourselves, "Who are Christians?", we now have the scriptural answer, illustrated by the examples above, in ACTS.

### CONCLUSION

Space has more than gone and all I've managed to do is to show how people BECOME Christians, scripturally. Obviously, converts must strive, thereafter, to REMAIN Christians by living in accordance with the teachings of Christ and His inspired apostles. In Acts 2(42) the early disciples (including the 3,000 at Pentecost) **"continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."** This is how they worshipped and served God.

Far be it from me to pontificate on the question as to who are Christians, and who are not Christians. Such a question can be settled only by the application of God's word. However, all aspiring Christian (whether Kings, Queens, Popes, Presidents, Mormons, Pentecostals, etc., or even ourselves) must ask themselves whether they have become Christians in the scriptural God-ordained manner. Having settled that question, they must then ask themselves if they are truly seeking to REMAIN Christians by CONTINUING STEADFASTLY IN THE APOSTLES DOCTRINE and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." Only upon a favourable answer to those questions, hangs the right to the term "Christian"; public opinion notwithstanding.

EDITOR.

## THE MASTER PREACHER

There have been many books written on the subject of preaching. They range from mechanics of sermon preparation to the preparation of the man. These books, as a whole, have been of great value to preachers in their quest for help and guidance in the task of preaching. Some preachers have tried to pattern their style after some great orator of the past or present. Needless to say, this automatically produces problems because of the frailties of the chosen example. When all of the books have been written, and there are no longer any styles to pattern after, we must look to Jesus for the example of the perfect preacher. In fact, we must start here.

While it is true Jesus is not called a "preacher" in the New Testament, it is obvious, however, that He did a lot of preaching. Mark records that Jesus came from the Father to preach: **"and He (Jesus) said unto them, let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth"** (Mark 1:38). God has only one Son and He went forth preaching. Therefore, we would do well to give close attention to the qualities of His preaching and duplicate them in our preaching ministry. In the remainder of this article let's notice a few of these qualities.

*First, in His preaching Jesus was fresh and different.* Several passages in the New Testament set forth this fact: **"This officer answered, never man spake like this man"** (John 7:46); **"For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes"** (Matt. 7:29). No one could accuse him of preaching to please people: **"Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?"** (John 6:60). In most pulpits of our day freshness and originality are the need of the hour. The Church will grow where it exists. By freshness and originality we do not mean content, that is if one is preaching the word, but rather, approach,

illustrations, etc.

*Second, Jesus never left any doubt in the minds of His audience.* One reason for this was because He spoke with authority, and as commanded by the Father: "For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:49,50). Many times today members of the audience leave more confused than when they arrived. This will be eliminated if we speak as Jesus did: as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11). Our charge is to "preach the word"; not about the word (cf. 2 Tim. 4:1-6).

*Third, Jesus preached the word as it was written:* ". . . As it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God . . . Jesus said unto him, it is written again, Thou shall not tempt the Lord thy God . . ." (Matt. 4:4,7). Thus if we are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, we must preach the word as it is written, without addition or subtraction (cf. Rev. 22:18,19).

*Fourth, Jesus had convictions in His preaching.* He made it clear that there is only one way for man to be saved from his sins. The Master said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14:6). He made it clear that the doctrines of men would condemn: "But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9). Jesus said the gate was "narrow" that leads to eternal life (cf. Matt. 7:13,14). And He made it clear that a person cannot serve two masters (Matt. 6:24). If we are going to preach like Jesus, we, too, must preach with conviction. A lack of conviction in the pulpit will produce a lack of conviction in the pew.

*Fifth, Jesus upheld and sanctioned all good in His preaching.* While rebuking error, He also found occasion to point out the good. The Pharisees were in many errors; yet Jesus sanctioned the truth taught by these men, too. Notice these remarks: "Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not after their works; for they say and do not" (Matt. 23:1-3).

*Sixth, Jesus was a man of prayer.* Throughout His ministry He is seen engaging in prayer; e.g., He prayed all night (Luke 6:11); He prayed before a great crisis (Luke 22:39-49); He prayed in solitude (Mark 1:35); He prayed for others (John 14:16; 16:26). A preacher is not prepared to preach until he is a man of prayer like the Master. If the Master needed to pray, how much more should we realize the necessity for prayer!

*Seventh, Jesus preached the answers to man's problems.* The sin problem which separates man from God (Mark 16:15, 16); the problems between neighbours (Matt. 5:40, 41); and problems between brethren (Matt. 18:15-17). This is what men need - the answers to their problems. If we are to preach like Jesus we will give the remedy for sin and the other problems of humanity.

*Eighth, Jesus illustrated His lessons.* This made it possible for the hearer to clearly understand His point. A study of His illustrations will reveal that they were simple, known by all, and easy to be grasped. He would take the known to make clear the unknown. This is seen in His parables. He would use such things as salt, sheep, light, fish, sparrows, doors, rocks, birds, flowers, coins and so forth, to illustrate His messages. As preachers of the gospel, we would do well to follow this example of Christ. Do not forget, however, that a sermon is not one long string of illustrations, but, rather, illustrations are to be used sparingly.

Truly Jesus was the world's greatest preacher. Those of us who preach must always strive to be like him in all things. Take the above list, which is by no means exhaustive, and add additional qualities descriptive of Jesus as the Master preacher. What a grand and glorious example we have in Jesus as a preacher. May God help us to follow in his footsteps.

J. TURNER.

## HOW WE GOT WHERE WE ARE

Glaring symptoms of moral decay are all around us today. Drug misuse, dishonesty in business, corrupt governments, broken homes, mounting crime, pornography, sexual promiscuity and a host of other problems all point to a morally sick society. It doesn't take a genius to list our problems, but one does need a sense of history to realize how we arrived at our present immoral status.

Historically we have followed the worst possible leadership. Most of the men who were influential in shaping our thinking during the last three centuries stressed humanism and atheism to the exclusion of God's moral standards of the Bible. Most people believe our society was founded solely on Christian ethics, but nothing could be further from the truth. Our present immorality resulted from the philosophical influence of men like Darwin, Dewey, Freud, Hegel, Huxley, Ingersoll, Kant, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche, Sartre to name only a few. These men are dead and their legacy is our present moral dilemma.

Before these men came along everyone thought in terms of cause and effect. If something was thought to be true, then the opposite was false. Men thought in terms of absolutes, so there was an absolute set of values. But these men gave us a new way of looking at life. They said truth and moral values are relative. This developed into the idea that in certain cases it might not be wrong to lie, or cheat, or have sex outside marriage. This disbelief in any absolute standard was next incorporated into an already corrupt Christian system. What followed was an era of rampant atheism whose offsprings were Atheistic Evolution and Atheistic Communism.

The idea that man simply evolved from lower animals in a struggle for survival seemed to give legitimacy to immoral behaviour. Since man had no specific reason for being here, except survival, then there was no special standard for him to live by. With survival in a material world as the all-important goal, Communism's "class struggle," which pitted the poor working class against the rich property holders, quickly took footing. The class struggle endorsed any conduct which achieved the end result it promoted, thus the end justified the means.

Furthermore, if man was here only to survive, then it seemed illogical that he should be inhibited by unnecessary moral restraints which kept him from fulfilling his basic drives. If moral restraints resulted only in unhappiness and neurosis, then why not discard the restraints and gratify man's basic nature? If there was no God, then there was no need for moral concern!

In this climate blossomed existentialism which said, "Do your own thing... if it feels good, do it." After all, life here was absurd and pointless, so the best one could do was to leave his mark, authenticate himself by some equally absurd personal act. The more absurd the better!

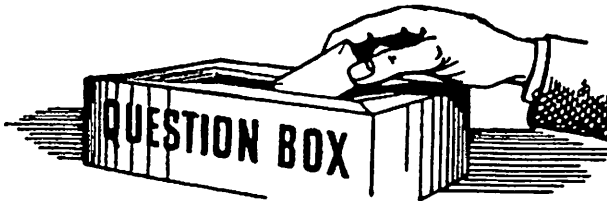
Next there came a general pragmatism which said, "Never mind whether a thing is moral or not, if it works do it." Here things are evaluated by the circumstances or

situation, not morality. All this developed into the New Morality or Situation Ethics. And that's how we got to where we are!

Had it not been for this groundwork, one-half of the earth might not presently be under godless form of government and the other half might not be in such moral ruin. A better world would have surely developed had we listened to better men than these. If only more individuals had been more adamant in proclaiming the Bible as an absolute standard of morality for men of every age, then undoubtedly we would be living in a better world today.

Well, so much for the world that might have been... what are we going to do with the world that is? The Bible tells us that man is capable of knowing inherently to some degree what is right and wrong and it specifically furnishes him with all the principles and precepts necessary to govern his moral behaviour. We are not alone! Why don't we take a stand for Bible morality?

C. COOK.




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Conducted by  
Frank Worgan

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### 1. "Was Paul a married man?"

The thought that Paul may have been a married man may seem strange at first; but we have to consider it as a possibility.

a) He certainly claimed the *right* to be married when he wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 9:5).

b) When he wrote that letter, he was undoubtedly, without a wife (See 1 Cor. 7:8).

c) The real heart of the question is whether this was because his wife was dead and he was, therefore, a widower, or whether his wife had divorced him when he became a Christian.

That his wife rejected *him* when he rejected *Judaism* is a distinct possibility - a virtual certainty - because this is what commonly happened. Any Jew or Jewess who became a Christian would certainly be:-

- 1) excommunicated from the Temple,
- 2) ostracised from formal society.
- 3) rejected by family and friends.
- 4) and if married, divorce would almost certainly follow.

Thus, it is very likely that Paul was, at first, rejected by his ultra-orthodox Pharisee family when he became a Christian. Phil. 3:4-5 revealed just how 'orthodox' his upbringing must have been. Only towards the end of his ministry do we find mention that some of his relatives had become Christians (Rom. 16:7).

d) I do not think that there is any serious doubt that he was a member of the Sanhedrin *before* he became a Christian, because, when Acts 8:1 states that he was '*consenting*' to the death of Stephen, it means that he '*cast his vote*' in favour of Stephen's death. In fact, he states this in Acts 26:10.

This implies his membership in the Sanhedrin, and it is true that one could not be a member of the Council under the age of 30, or unmarried. Indeed, Judaism taught that



an unmarried man '*diminishes the divine image*' in the world. And, '*a man who has no wife lives without joy, without blessing, without good*'. Rabbi Eleazar said, "A man who has no wife is not even a man, as it is stated; 'Male and female He created them and He named *them* 'man' " (Gen. 5:2).

The answer to the question therefore, must be: At one time Paul was married, but, by the time he wrote 1st Cor. 7:8 he was no longer a married man.

### 2. "*Was Barnabas an apostle? A brother has said that he was!*"

Whoever said that Barnabas was an apostle should have explained that there are three sorts of apostles mentioned in the N.T. The word itself, '*apostolos*', simply means '*one sent*'.

1) Because Jesus was sent by God, he is described as "*the apostle and high priest of our confession*". Heb. 3:1.

2) During His ministry He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve, "*whom He named apostles*". The twelve were apostles of Christ, because He chose them and sent them out.

3) In Acts 13, the Holy Spirit instructed the Church at Antioch to "*set apart for me Barnabas and Saul . . .*", and the Church prayed and fasted and sent them out.

In Acts 14:14 it is recorded, "*when the apostles, BARNABAS and Saul heard . . .*"

Barnabas was not an apostle in the same sense as the Twelve; that is. He was not an apostle of Christ; because he did not meet the qualifications.

a) He had not accompanied Christ from the time of John's baptism;

b) was not a witness of the resurrection;

c) had not been chosen by Christ personally.

But he was an apostle of the Church at Antioch in Syria, because they sent him out; and it was to that Church that Paul and Barnabas reported at the end of that First Missionary Journey.

### 3. "*When did the Samaritans receive the Holy Spirit?*"

Acts 8 records that the Samaritans believed and obeyed the Gospel preached by Philip.

We may be sure that, because they identified themselves with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus by being baptised into Him, they received the promised gift - the '*dorea*', - that is, the '*free gift*' - of the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 2:38.

Bear in mind that, contrary to what some teach, this promise was not only given to the Jews, but also '*to all who are afar off*' - a phrase which any Jew would recognise as referring to Gentiles. This is, in fact, how Paul describes the Ephesians in Eph. 2:13.

But, when Peter and John came from Jerusalem and realised that the Samaritians had '*received the word*', they laid hands upon the converts, to impart something extra - a spiritual gift.

In accordance with Acts 2:38 and 5:32, everyone who believes and is baptised receives '*the gift of the Holy Spirit*' - i.e., the Spirit as an indwelling Presence. But the apostles had the power to lay hands on people and, in this way, to impart miraculous powers.

Romans 1:11 refers to this apostolic power, in the letter Paul wrote to the Church at Rome, which, up to that time, he had not visited. How would he impart the gift? Read 2nd Tim. 1:6.

We must remember that those on whom the apostles laid their hands did not themselves have the power to impart spiritual gifts to others. For instance, Philip the evangelist had the power to perform miracles (Acts 6:6). But he did not have the authority to pass on this power to those Samaritans who had obeyed the Gospel and

who, obviously, had received the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. The apostles in Jerusalem, therefore '*sent down Peter and John*', who, having assured themselves of the genuineness of the Samaritan conversions, laid hands on them, and the effect was that Simon '*saw that by the laying on of the hands of the apostle the Spirit was given*'.

Furthermore, since the qualifications required of those who became an apostle of Christ, as revealed in Acts 1:21-22, make it impossible for them to have successors, that authority and power died with the original apostles.

I do not think there is any other conclusion to which we can arrive other than to say that all who obey the Gospel receive the gift of the Spirit, but, in N.T. times, there was a special endowment of the Spirit (I use that word for want of a better!) which was received by the imposition of apostolic hands.

This passage, Acts 8:5-19, reveals that the Samaritans received both the '*dorea*' - God's free gift of the Spirit, and the extra '*charisma*' - the grace-gifts - at the hands of the apostles.

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## ANOINTING WITH OIL (Part 2)

*(A Study of James 5:13-20)*

(6) vs. 14 - "**anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.**" **Two Things** are necessary in order to understand the command (for it is a command to those "elders" who have been called upon to pray).

Incidentally the word translated "elders" in this particular place is "*prebuteros*" meaning older and does not therefore indicate an "elder" in the sense of an appointed "elder" and has in many places been used interchangeably with the word "*episkopoi*" which is variously translated as "bishops", "elders", and "overseers".

(A) The "background" or "context" of "anointing with oil"

(B) The understanding of "in the name of the Lord".

(A) The first recorded reference to anointing with oil is found in Gen. 28:18.

God himself refers to this letter in Gen. 31:13 in order that Jacob can clearly identify God with that particular event. Jacob used that anointing to mark or dedicate the exact spot upon the land that God promised to give him, and his seed. (a promise that was subsequently fulfilled in Judges 1:22-23).

The next time we see "anointing with oil" **its purpose is clearly stated and precisely spelled out.** Ex. 28:41 "Anoint them", and "consecrate" them, and "sanctify" them, that they may "minister" unto me in the "priests' office".

Ex. 30:22-33 The EXACT formula for the special "anointing oil" is here given and in vs. 31 - we are told that it was to be a "holy" anointing oil - dedicated to God - throughout the generations of the Israelites and in vs. 32 - it was to be "holy" to them. In vs. 33 a clear warning is given to anyone who would make anything like it.

If we examine any of the other instances where men in the Old Testament were "anointed" we will see that it was always for the purpose of dedication to the service of the Lord.

So how are we to understand "anointing with oil" in the New Testament age?

Carefully read all of Heb. chapters 8 and 9

"anointing with oil" was one of the many O.T. ordinances, and if it was a shadow or a pattern - a metaphorical or figurative demonstration of something that was to come,

and which would be the real thing, then, in the light of what the N.T. reveals we must recognize it as a spiritual endowment. Why?

**Hosea 9** - In this chapter the warning is given to Israel that the day was almost upon them when their offerings and sacrifices would be as the "bread of mourners" vs. 4 (in other words the offerings would be dead and the system done away with). In vs. 7 they are informed of just exactly how they would view anyone who was spiritual - to them "the spiritual man is mad".

It would be, and still is, useless to try to convince any Jew who has not accepted Christ, that the "anointing with oil" is anything but a literal physical thing or ceremony to be performed (to say nothing about some misunderstanding "Christians"), and no doubt any other "spiritual" view would and is considered "insane".

**Col. 1:9** - Paul here reveals that he prayed constantly that the brethren might be; among other things, "filled with spiritual understanding". Did Paul know what he was doing or was he insane?

The Jews (at least some of them) thought Jesus was mad - John 10:19-20.

Acts 26:24-25 Paul was accused of being mad.

**1st Cor. 2:6 ff** - We are told that the messages delivered by the apostles were not the same as the rulers or ones in authority in that age, but rather they spoke (vs. 7) "God's secret wisdom" - a "wisdom that has been hidden" (vs. 8) "none of the rulers of this age" (the Mosaic or O.T. age, the age of the Law and of literal physical ordinances, sacrifices and practices) "understood it" - "for if they had they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" - "but (vs. 10) God has revealed it to us by his **SPIRIT**" (vs. 14) - "The man without the Spirit does not **accept** the things that come from the Spirit of God".

Men who claim that the "anointing of oil" today is the same as in the days of Moses, and who stumble around blindly trying to determine what KIND of oil to use - Olive oil?, Motor oil?, Palm oil?, Polyunsaturated? - stubbornly reject the things that today come from and are revealed by the Spirit. In conclusion of this chapter we are told that (vs. 16) "we have the mind of Christ" - which the apostles and the other inspired writers, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, have revealed to us through their words, which are the very words of God.

(B) The subject here is: "in the name of the Lord" (vs. 14).

Just exactly what is the Lord's name?

In Matt. 1:21 an angel of the Lord told Joseph to call the child "Jesus".

In vs. 23 "they shall call his name Emmanuel (God with us).

The message from the Lord said to call him Jesus and the people said he was God with us. But in vs. 17 he is referred to as "Christ" (K.J.V.) "the Christ" (N.I.V.) which interpreted means - the anointed one.

When Jesus asked Peter who he thought Jesus was, Peter answered "Thou art the Christ" (Matt. 16:16).

In order to understand the significance and implication of "The Christ" consider what you would understand if you asked what someone's name was and I told you; that is Jack the plumber or that's John the baker. You would know one of his names but you would also know what he did.

Jesus was Jesus the Christ and we must examine "the Christ" to see what it was that Jesus DID, what it was that he was to accomplish and how he was to do exactly that, in order to fulfil his Father's will.

As we examine and trace the meaning of the Greek word translated "Christ" we find that it incorporates all of the following meanings:

Christos - anointed - from the word Chrio - the idea of contact, to smear or rub with oil - by implication to consecrate to an office or religious service - anoint incorporating the words meaning of Chraomai to handle - to furnish what is needed (give an oracle, graze (touch slightly, light upon) example: to employ, to act towards one in a given manner, entreat or use clearly. (All from "Strong's" concordance.)

"The Christ" then was: (1) To consecrate men to God's service, setting men apart by contact (done through various means, verbally, directly and indirectly through others).

(2) To supply what is needed to save men's souls (done once and for all by the shedding of His blood and His sacrifice of His body). To supply through His life and His teaching (actions and words) all that is necessary for men to live as God would have them live.

(3) To light upon men (metaphorically) and to enlighten their minds and bring them out of darkness into light.

By now reasonable men should be able to see that the "anointing with oil" used by James was the undertaking of bringing the brother back into proper relationship with God through the use of effectual, intelligent and appropriately worded prayers that would result in the brother being spiritually re-consecrated and revived to serve his Lord, as was originally intended for all believers who submit to his will and are baptized into his body - (1 Cor. 12:13-27) the body of Christ - the Spiritual, Spirit-filled body of all those who choose to fulfil God's intended purpose for them to serve Him.

G. SILLMAN,  
P.O. Box 327, Chilliwack,  
B.C., Canada, V2P 6J4.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

The following balance sheet shows a satisfactory level of income to expenditure, we increased the Subscription Rate in the autumn of last year to £9 to maintain this position. We continue to be very appreciative of all the generous gifts we receive from congregations and brethren and could not continue without them.

This balance sheet includes payment for Reading Cards for both last year and 1998. It should be noted that the Bound Volumes are self financing in that we sell them at cost plus postage.

This report is a very brief comment on the magazine's financial standing. If anyone would like further clarification I would be willing to answer any points raised.

### BALANCE SHEET FOR 1997

Income		Expenditure	
Bank account 1/1/97	£957.22	Printing	£4,248.00
Subscriptions	3,173.03	Postage	821.31
Bank Interest	49.05	Reading Cards	112.60
Gifts	<u>2,684.70</u>	Bound Vols.	<u>276.20</u>
	<u>5,906.78</u>	Bank account 31/12/97	5,458.11
	<u>£6,864.00</u>		<u>1,405.89</u>
			<u>£6,864.00</u>

J.K. Kneller (Treasurer).

*I have examined the books, receipts, etc. and find them to be correct and in good order.*

J.H. Currie (Auditor) 6th February, 1998.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

April 5	Genesis 45:1-15	2 Cor. 1:21 to 2:17
April 12	Exodus 34:21-35	2 Cor. 3
April 19	Genesis 1:1.19	2 Cor. 4
April 26	Daniel 12	2 Cor. 5

### THE SUFFERING OF PAUL

Paul was very anxious about the reaction the saints at Corinth would have to his first letter. "At length the long-expected Titus arrived at Philippi and relieved the anxiety of his master by better tidings than he had hoped to hear. The majority of the Corinthian Church had submitted to the injunctions of Paul and testified the deepest repentance for the sins into which they had fallen" (Conybeare and Howson).

A lot of us know what it is like to be under pressure in the modern world. In fact there is too much stress these days for our nation's common good. Paul would sympathise with us because he knew pressure, but of a different kind. The real weight that pressed upon him was **"the care of all the churches"** (11:28). He also wrote: **"For when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side: without were fightings, within were fears"** (7:5). How he suffered and laboured for the Master! He was comforted by the fact that Jesus was with him every step of the way, every minute of the day. **"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body"** (4:8-10).

### FORGIVENESS OF THE SINNER

We recall from the first epistle that a man in the congregation was having

sexual relations with his father's wife (in other words, his step-mother). Paul has instructed them to excommunicate this individual **"for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"** (5:5). This they had done. Now in the second letter we read of his restoration to Church fellowship. The discipline had worked. "Pastoral discipline among the early Christians was always remedial. The temporary exclusion of an impenitent offender was to safeguard the fellowship from being implicated in his sin, and to secure his repentance and subsequent return" (Norman Hillyer). Our late brother Jack Nisbet of Haddington often talked about the right thing being done in the right way. The case of this sinner is a good case in point.

### THE NEW COVENANT

"The design of the Jewish religion and the design of the Christian are not the same" (Alexander Campbell). I am always interested in reading Paul's comparisons of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. After all, he knew all about both. Paul clearly taught that the New Covenant in Christ Jesus was the fulfilment of the Old Covenant, which came through Moses. Paul compared **"the tables of stone"** with **"the tables of the heart"** (3:3); **"the letter"** with **"the Spirit"** (3:6); **"the ministration of death"** with **"the ministration of the Spirit"** (3:7,8); **"the ministration of condemnation"** with **"the ministration of righteousness"** (3:9). I wish to quote the whole of verses 9 to 11: **"If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!"** (N.I.V.).

I think about the Orthodox Jews a

lot. As I write this article on a Saturday afternoon, I know they will be in their synagogues worshipping Jehovah in their own, unique way. They will be reading from the Torah - the Law, the writings of Moses. Perhaps the following passage will be studied: **"The Lord thy God will raise up unto you a Prophet from the midst of you; unto him you shall hearken. . ."** (Deuteronomy 18:15). I see in these words Jesus of Nazareth, the son of the living God. The Jews, of course, do not. The problem is the veil covering their hearts and minds (3:14,15). The answer is simple: **"But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away"** (3:16). The result is freedom through the Spirit of the Lord. **"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"** (3:17). Paul went on to say: **"But all of us who are Christians have no veils on our faces, but reflect like mirrors the glory of the Lord. We are transfigured by the Spirit of the Lord in ever-increasing splendour into His own image"** (3:18, J.B. Phillips). As day succeeds day, may we become more and more like Him, whom we love and serve.

#### **JOY AND JUDGEMENT TO COME**

The body is like an earthly tent. It constitutes a temporary dwelling place. The real abode of the soul is heaven. The Christian looks beyond this scene of time to eternity where he or she will be clothed with a heavenly body. There the corruptible will have put on incorruption and the mortal will have put on immortality. The new body will enable one to serve and worship God in His very presence. **"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."** (1 John 3:2). Paul looked forward to the day when he had "shuffled off this mortal coil". It would be a day of great joy. However, he did not despise his life on

earth. He had the gift of the Holy Spirit and He was the foretaste of the life everlasting.

Paul believed he was on his way to heaven, but he also believed he had to face a judgment. **"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad"** (5:10). **"But the 'judgment of the great day' is . . . not, as some profanely say, 'to bring men out of heaven and hell to judge and remand them back again'; but in the presence of an assembled world to vindicate the administrations of the moral government and providence of God, to develop the real characters of angels and of men, and to pronounce an irrevocable sentence upon all according to their works"** (Alexander Campbell).

#### **THE NEW CREATION**

Paul was **"an ambassador for Christ"** (5:20). The term "ambassador" is limited to the apostles. The apostles were involved in the ministry of reconciliation and reconciliation between man and God is possible through Christ Jesus, whom God made **"to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him"** (5:21). **"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new"** (5:17). "New" in Greek is *kainos* and denotes "not new in time, recent, but new as to form or quality, of different nature from what is contrasted as old" (W.E. Vine). In the conversion of the sinner "there is a change so deep, so clear, so entire, and so abiding, that it is proper to say, here is a new creation of God - a work of Divine power as decided and as glorious as when God created all things out of nothing" (Albert Barnes).

IAN S. DAVIDSON,  
Motherwell.

## TEST YOU BIBLICAL KNOWLEGE

1. Who was Abraham's father?
2. Who was David's bosom friend?
3. Who was the king of Salem?
4. This famous witch lived in the days of king Saul.
5. Who were Gershom and Eliezer?
6. Name the king who ordered Daniel's punishment.
7. Name the chief of the priests in Ephesus who had seven sons.
8. Who was Julius?
9. Name a Macedonian who travelled with Paul to Rome.
10. To which island was John banished?

## OBITUARY

**Tranent:** It is with sadness that the Church in Tranent announce the death of our sister Etta King.

Sister Etta passed away on the twenty-sixth of December, 1997, at the age of 85 years. Sister Etta came to her Lord in her early youth and remained faithful till her death. Sister Etta taught in the Sunday school for some years as far back as 1932. Until recently she was always present at The Lord's Table but age and health prevented her during these last months. As with all God's children she will be missed here, but has gone to a much brighter Heavenly home.

Brother Joe Nisbet and Brother Alex Strachan conducted the service at Seafield crematorium.

**Kirkby in Ashfield:** It is with great sadness that the Church at Kirkby in Ashfield report the death on 16th January of Bro. Tom Woodhouse after a great fight for him in the ICU at the Kings Mill Hospital.

Tom was 82 years. He was baptised into Christ in 1937 and married Edna in

1939. They have two sons Robert and David who both gave moving tributes to their father at the service held at the Mansfield Crematorium. The service was led by Bro. David Wilson assisted by four other brethren.

Tom loved his Lord immensely. He loved the Church. He was a profound Biblical scholar who was always willing to share his vast knowledge and always first to serve without thought of reward. Throughout his life Tom was a very brave man who was prepared to take on the state for his beliefs. He was described by his life long friend as, "a spiritual giant in the Church." By another, "as a jewel in the crown," another said "he always put others before himself, even to the end when he was clearly unwell." We give thanks to God for the life and example of this truly wonderful brother, husband, father and grandfather and the privilege we have had of knowing him. We shall never forget Bro. Tom and rejoice that God has now chosen to take him unto Himself.

T. KING

## THANKS

I wish to thank all my brothers and sisters, who have so kindly sent me letters and cards offering their sympathy and support at the passing of my dear husband Tom. There have been so many from around Britain and whilst I would wish to reply to each of you, I fear it is not going to be possible. Your prayers and support continue to help me through this difficult time. I am thankful that Tom and I were able to share 58 happy years together, which were enriched by our love for the Lord. Thank you all for the help you have given to me and my family. The Lord's Church is indeed a wonderful family.

EDNA WOODHOUSE.

**P.N.G.**

Readers will be pleased to hear that the government in P.N.G. is taking more responsibility for providing aid to those who have suffered great loss and hardship in the recent storms.

If an appeal is required to be made for further help in the near future, I will let readers know, but, in the meantime I would wish, on behalf of all the brethren in P.N.G., to thank all those Churches and individuals who have sent help in recent months. It has been gratefully received. Thank you.

RUTH COLES.

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on Saturday, 18th April, 1998

**BUCKIE SOCIAL**

SATURDAY, 2nd MAY, 1998

at 3.30pm

Speaker: Bro. J. Nisbet

All Welcome

**TRANENT SOCIAL**

SATURDAY, 16th MAY, 1998

10. Palmos (Revelation 1:9).

9. Aristarchus (Acts 27:2).

(Acts 27:1).

8. The centurion in charge of Paul and his fellow prisoners on their voyage to Rome

7. Scava (Acts 19:14).

6. Darius (Daniel 6:9ff).

5. Moses' two sons (Exodus 18:2-4).

4. Witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28:7).

3. Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18).

2. Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:1).

1. Terah (Genesis 11:27).

**ANSWERS**

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