

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## NAMING THE NAME

This week the Italian President has greatly angered the Islamic world by suggesting that the standard of life in the western world (with a leaning towards Christianity) is much superior to that part of the eastern world which is under Islamic religious control. This has, of course, stirred up heated discussions, especially on TV chat shows, as to the merits, or otherwise, of either religion. Just today, Moslem leaders have also been complaining about references to “Islamic Terrorists”: stating that the correct terminology should simply be “terrorists”: and pointing out that they (Moslems), when referring to Northern Ireland, would never think to talk about “Christian terrorists”.

The Moslem leaders have a point, and of course there are terrorists everywhere, of all shapes and sizes and with all forms of motivation. However “Christian Terrorists” would be a contradiction in terms. Those in Northern Ireland, representing the IRA or UDA etc. who throw petrol bombs, shoot off knee-caps, leave high-explosives in public places, assassinate and commit all forms of murder can hardly be described as Christians. They may **nominally** be regarded as Roman Catholics or Protestants, but could not, even remotely, be regarded as followers of Jesus Christ. Surely such men (and women) are politically motivated: one group striving for a united Ireland: the other group trying to prevent it. “Christianity” has, over the years, been blamed for all kinds of misfortune, quite unjustifiably, but surely can not be regarded as responsible for the carnage in Ulster. Apologists for the orchestration of violence from the Taliban, strive to excuse it by saying that there is just as much violence in Britain, and Britain is a “Christian” country. This, of course, is just another glaring misconception; and the sad truth is that while Britain may **nominally** be regarded as a Christian country, it is fast becoming perhaps one of the most Godless countries in the world.

### IN NAME ONLY

At school we used to be told that Britain was a “Christian” country. Very few teachers would try and tell pupils that sort of thing today; it would cause too much hilarity in the classroom. Using even a very loose definition of “Christian” Britain could never be described by that term although I suppose it is *nominally* “Christian” in contrast to Russia being described as a land of atheists.

The word “nominal” is from the latin *nominalis* which means “belonging to a name; or, existing in name only; verbal but not actual”. Thus Britain is nominally “Christian” i.e. in name only. To *nominate* (the verb) means *to name a person* (usually to some office). Thus we read in the local press that the lads on the factory floor have nominated Joe Bloggs to be Shop Steward. To nominate means, therefore, to recommend a name towards some appointment. The lads on the shop floor did not give Joe Bloggs his

name, they merely "named the name" as suitable candidate for Shop Steward. It was God who gave Jesus His name. The angels decreed "**Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins**". Christians, however, *name the name of Jesus* in the sense that they *nominate* Him as their Lord and Master. To *de-nominate* means "to name down" and so denominationalism is a breaking down of the Church into factions or denominations.

Paul mentions those "**who have named the name of Jesus**" (in II Tim. 2:19) when he says "**and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity**". Those who have "named the name of Christ" have become His servants and have nominated Him to be their leader and king. Thus they may be termed "Christians". It is possible however to take His name but not to take His nature; to nominate Him with our lips but not sublimate him in our lives - in short to be Christians only in a nominal sense i.e. in name only. I suppose that what can be true of a country can equally be true of an individual. If Britain can be "Christian" only nominally, so can individuals.

#### 'NAMING THE NAME' OF JESUS

**In this 2nd Chap. of II Timothy** Paul says some striking things about what is expected of those who have named the name of Christ. He likens Christians to soldiers (of all things) and says that followers of Jesus must *endure hardships* as "good soldiers" of Jesus Christ. (v.3). Enduring hardship may not appeal to many of us and so we shall, perhaps, take steps to avoid it. During the First World War young men used to stand in long queues to join the army but after a few weeks in the trenches, lying unwashed in the mud, hungry and covered in lice, deafened by bursting shells and shrieks of the wounded, they would have given anything to get home. In our centrally heated meeting-houses, with the wall-to-wall carpeting, it is difficult to realise that there is a war going on and that Christ is depending on us in the heat of the battle. We might snipe away at one-another but the nearest we shall come to actual danger is the possibility of a long sermon making us late for lunch.

**Then (v.4)** Paul points out that "**no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life. That he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier**". Thus, when we become soldiers for Christ we resign a lot of personal freedom and become subject to Army Law. The farmer leaves off ploughing; the mechanic leaves his tools; the merchant leaves his store; the clerk his desk, when he becomes a soldier and truly understands that he cannot resume such activities until the war is over. Think of all the brethren who have become involved in the world's affairs (sometimes rising to great heights as politicians, magistrates etc) and having discovered that we really cannot serve God and mammon, have ditched God.

**In v.7-14** Paul, while reminding us that he suffered personally (as an evildoer) for teaching the resurrection of Christ and was actually placed in bonds, he, at the same time rejoiced in the knowledge *that God's word could not be chained*. The only places where God's word is bound is in closed Bibles or the sealed lips of those who "have named the name of Christ". God depends on us to spread His word. Other gigantic steps in personal committal include being prepared *to die* with Christ that we might live with Him; being prepared *to suffer* with him that we might reign with Him; knowing that if we *deny Him* He will deny us. In these latter verses the word "If" indicates to us that the matter (*If we suffer with Him: If we deny Him*) is one in which we make a completely personal choice.

**Then, in v.15** Paul provides those words, now so well known, advocating Christians to "**Study (or to agonise) to show themselves approved unto God, as workmen that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth**". We must handle aright God's word but (next verse) "**shun profane and vain babblings**

which lead unto more ungodliness, and which eat as doth a canker of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus". It has been most helpful of Paul to give us an example of what he means by "profane and vain babblings" and by citing the case of these two church members. Hymenaeus and Philetus taught that "the resurrection was past already" and thus erred from the truth and overthrew the faith of some. This surely shows how we must strive to be correct doctrinally and how careful we must be in what we teach. These two Christians are on the eternal record as those who "erred from the truth" and "overthrew the faith of some", because of their mistaken understanding of the resurrection (a fairly harmless misconception as some might think.)

**In v.19** we are given the glorious assurance that nothing will prevail against the Church. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are His, And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity". No matter what happens, and in spite of all the false teaching that goes on, the "foundation of God" (and the foundation of the Church) stands secure and undiminished. Men can pluck the leaves, or even snap the branches but they cannot destroy the tree. The foundation of the Church is Christ and His apostles and so it can never be shaken. It has also, says Paul, this seal - Firstly "The Lord knoweth them that are His": and Secondly, "Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity". This is, perhaps, an allusion to the practice of large edifices having the architect's, or builder's, name chiselled on the foundation stone. Thus there are on the plinth of the Church these two seals or inscriptions:-

(1) "The Lord knoweth them that are His". This presupposes that in every age there will be in the Church those who are *not His - nominal Christians* i.e. in name only. This seal means that no matter who apostatizes or teaches error the foundation remains unscathed and others, better deserving can build upon it. If all the Christians in this age where to "down tools", spiritually speaking, the next generation could easily pick them up again. This seal also means that no-one can deceive God and that amongst all the many thousands who enter the Church God knows those who are truly His and can oversee them with a benevolent eye. Jesus, Himself, warned that many on that great day would say unto Him, "Lord, Lord, have we not done many wonderful works in Thy name" and He would disclaim all knowledge of them and say, "Depart from me, I never knew you."

(2) "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity". Christians are those who have "made the good confession" and named the name of Jesus. At baptism we "call upon the name of the Lord" and acknowledge our *nomination* of Him as our new Master and Lord. We are thus translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God, Having thrust off the bondage of Satan and taken upon us the yoke which is easy and the burden which is light, we must not live as we did before. Having nominated Jesus as Lord we must treat Him as such, with all reverence and Godly fear.

### SELF-EXAMINATION

Now these few verses from II Timothy constitute only a minute part of the N.T. and yet we are brought face to face with many of the things expected of us. Christians are soldiers for Christ, locked in a warfare with the Devil, committed to hardship and disentanglement with worldly considerations; to die (daily) with Christ and to suffer with Him; to agonise and study to receive approval; an unashamed workman, handling God's word intelligently and eschewing false teachings and vain disputations. All these allude to nouns, anything but attractive; hardship, warfare, suffering, sacrifice, agony, work, fidelity, and we could add many more. This seemed to be the Christianity of the N.T. and we often advocate a return to N.T. Christianity, do we not? When we look at

ourselves today, and look around us at the religious world, is it not true to say that much of Christianity is fairly nominal - Christianity in name only. Are we *nominal Christians* - Christians in name only? How do we shape up to such a suggestion? A question was posed in a religious magazine recently, somewhat to the effect "If you were arrested for being a Christian could they find evidence against you?" We may have smiled at it, but once we try and tabulate the evidence, it might not be so funny. No one wants to be regarded as a nominal Christian but we can all put ourselves through a little test by asking ourselves a few searching and uncomfortable questions. For example *how many hours*, on an average week, do we devote solely to the service of our Lord and Master. What do we actually ever *do* for Jesus. What do we ever say for Jesus? What do we actually *give* towards the Lord's work? The work languishes for lack of funds but what do we give to it in contrast to what we spend on our selves? It is better for us to ask ourselves these questions now, than for Jesus to ask them later. What am I doing for Jesus? Do I preach the gospel to my neighbour? Do I visit the sick or leave it to others? Do I encourage my brethren or look bored? Am I enthusiastic about the Lord's work or does someone have to cajole me? I can easily point out the shortcomings of others; can I see my own faults? Do I take any steps to relieve suffering, or visit the lonely members? Do I encourage any weaker brethren, or ignore them? If we were to write down what we actually do, in a week, for Jesus we might be surprised; even shocked.

#### UNDERSTANDING IN ALL THINGS

Jesus knew about nominal Christians. He said, "What do ye more than others?" If you love those who love you, and are good to those who are good to you, you are really no better than anyone else, for *even the publicans* had reached that standard. So said Jesus (in Matt.5) when He added this general rule, "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (v.20). We say that we love Jesus with our lips but do we deny it with our lives? Love (and faith) can only really be expressed in actions. God loved us *and acted* - indeed we read that God *so loved* the world that *He gave* His only Son. When we think of what God has given to us - what do we give back to Him? When we consider what God has done for us - what do we actually do for Him? Truly we must love God, and believe God, but we must also obey God and serve God. **What more do we than others?** Do we give our earthly employer a higher standard of service than we give to our Heavenly Master? As those who have "named the name of Jesus" and nominated Him as our Lord and Saviour, what are we really and truly doing for Him? In short are we, like Britain as a country, only Christian in a nominal sense; i.e. Christian in name only?

If the answer tends to be in the affirmative let us change all that, and let us be up and doing; seeking ways to help in the great cause of Christ, let us endure hardness as good soldiers of the great warfare. As Paul says (in v.7 of the chap. already quoted from II Tim.) "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things."

EDITOR

### SPIRITUAL SMOKE ALARMS

Suppose your friend told you he had just removed the battery from his smoke alarm. The previous night, the alarm had gone off, and your friend found that piercing signal so discomfoting, so unpleasant, he decided he would rather not listen to it. What would you tell your friend? Would you inform him of the great personal risk he had taken by not heeding the alarm, and the risk of disconnecting it?

There is a similar situation today in the lives of millions of people in the world, and even among members of the Church. Many have failed to realise that built within them is a spiritual smoke alarm, and thus have failed to heed its signal. Many have disconnected it completely!

### THE CONSCIENCE: WHAT IS IT?

A study of the New Testament passages which speak of man's conscience reveals two meanings of this word. One minor meaning is a reference to each person's consciousness, his awareness of facts, conditions etc. This meaning is reflected in some of the more recent translations. For example, in Hebrews 10:2, the writer points out that if the Mosaic sacrifices had been effective, the worshippers **"would no longer have any consciousness of sin"** (RSV). The word translated by the RSV as **"consciousness"** is rendered by the KJV as **"conscience."** Other passages where the traditional rendering of **"conscience"** seems to have this minor meaning of **"consciousness"** are II Corinthians 5:11 and I Peter 2:19 (and others).

However, *the primary meaning* in the New Testament of **"conscience"** is the idea suggested by a literal rendering of the Greek root: *"knowing together."* The idea is that of a witness in court who testifies to the truth of a fact or statement. The truth is established, not by one witness, but by two or more. In this sense, the conscience is that which testifies to the loyalty of ourselves to the truth which we know. Paul shows this sense of the word **"conscience"** in Romans 2:15, where, when speaking of the Gentiles he states: **"They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness . . ."** In other words, the Gentiles had two reasons for doing what was right. **First**, they had knowledge of right and wrong written on their hearts; and **second**, their conscience also testified to what was right and wrong.

In other passages, Paul appeals to his conscience as confirmation of a statement. In Romans 9:1, 2, he says **"my conscience bears me witness"** that he had great concern for his people. Again, in II Corinthians 1:12, he states his sincerity while in the Corinthians' presence, and to confirm this fact, again appealed to **"the testimony of our conscience."** To put it another way, the Corinthians had two witnesses to Paul's sincerity: his own statement, and the testimony of Paul's conscience, which agreed with his statement.

James Bales referred to the conscience as a **"stern judge."** The idea is of a separate **"person"** within us who stands back, evaluating and judging our actions on the basis of the knowledge available. The popular picture of the conscience also agrees with this, often seen in cartoons as the small copy of the individual, sitting upon the individual's shoulder, whispering advice and handing down judgments. But however the conscience is pictured, the point is the same: Each has within him a faculty of judging and evaluating his actions. (That this is a faculty which all possess is shown by Paul, in Romans 2:15, when he speaks of the Gentiles' conscience - the Gentile who was without God or religion). And, as the scriptures point out, this is a most vital faculty to possess.

### THE GOOD CONSCIENCE

A study of the Biblical passages on conscience will also reveal numerous references to the conscience which is **"good"**, **"clear"** or **"clean."** Paul, in viewing his past life, could say he had served God with a **"clear conscience"** (II Timothy 1:3). The Hebrew writer states **"we are sure we have a clear conscience"** (Hebrews 13:18). Peter urges Christians of all times to **"keep your consciences clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame"** (I Peter 3:16). With these examples and commands, it is only natural to next ask, What is a good conscience?

One effective way of deciding what a good conscience is is to look at what a good

conscience *is not*. Several types of conscience are mentioned in the scriptures which are obviously not recommended to the Christian. By understanding these, we can more easily see what type of conscience we should have.

**FIRST**, the scriptures speak of the “**weak conscience.**” Paul discusses the weak conscience at length in I Corinthians 8:7-13. In this passage, the specific situation is the matter of eating meat which has been offered to idols. It is clear from the context that eating this meat was not wrong in itself. One could eat it with no harmful consequences. But the same act, for another individual, could lead to sin. What made the difference? The amount of knowledge is an important point to consider, but not the primary point. The brother with a weak conscience probably was a recent convert to Christianity, but had not had time to gain the needed knowledge about idols. The real point seems to be that this brother with the weak conscience was one who did not follow the advice of his conscience. Until he saw the stronger brother eating meat, he had no problem. But when the example of the stronger brother conflicted the advice of the weaker brothers’ conscience, the example of the stronger brother prevailed. The problem with this situation is simple: The advice of the conscience was not heeded! For that reason, it was termed by Paul a “weak conscience.”

**SECOND**, the scriptures speak of the “**seared conscience,**” in I Timothy 4:2. There are two possible ideas involved with the word “seared”, both of which Paul may have had in mind. One idea is that of a branding-iron. As cattle on a ranch are branded for life to show ownership, so our consciences are “branded” with every instance of sin. Our sins may be forgiven and overcome, but they will always leave their scars. A second idea of “seared conscience” might be that of “cautery,” or loss of sensitivity. Anyone who has burned a finger, or any part of the body, knows there is a subsequent loss of sensitivity, either in part or in whole. The same is true with our consciences. When we sin, and so abuse or neglect the conscience, there is a gradual loss of sensitivity in our conscience.

**THIRD**, there is mention made in the scriptures of the “**corrupted conscience,**” in Titus 1:15. The question might be asked, How was the conscience corrupted? Was that its original form? Those of us who reject the idea of hereditary depravity would say, No. Rather, the conscience was evidently made corrupt through the constant practice of evil and unbelief. It was a conditioning process. The more sin committed, the more depraved the conscience became.

**FOURTH**, the scriptures speak of the “**rejected conscience**” in I Timothy 1:19. Some translations specifically say “**By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith**” (RSV), while most translations follow the lead of the KJV in stating “**which some having put away,**” referring to both “**faith and a good conscience.**” But the idea in either translation is the same: Those who reject faith, are set on a course which leads to a shipwreck of their faith. There is great danger involved when one chooses not to listen to his conscience!

**Therefore**, a good conscience, defined by contrast, is one which is: (1) Not weak, but has a strong influence in our decision-making process; (2) Not seared, or abused by constant evil-doing; (3) Not corrupted by the continual practice of evil and sin in our lives; and (4) Not rejected, but always heeded.

Paul, in making his defence before the Sanhedrin, said “**I have lived before God in all good conscience up to this day**” (Acts 23:1). Could Paul really say that, considering his past activity in persecuting Christians? Yes, for Paul was not speaking of the accuracy of his knowledge. Certainly, there had been a time in his life when he had the facts all wrong; but never had he gone against the counsel and advice of what his conscience had told him. What a compliment for anyone!

### OUR NEED FOR A GOOD CONSCIENCE

As stated before, the scriptures often encourage Christians to make sure their consciences are good, clear and strong. Paul showed the necessity of this in I Timothy 1:18, 19, when he said the absence of conscience and faith leads to a "shipwreck" of our faith. Paul had earlier told Timothy in this epistle that **"the aim of our change is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith"** (I Tim 1:5). Thus, the message is clear: It is incumbent upon every Christian to make sure his conscience meets the Biblical qualifications of a good conscience.

Practically, there are **three major conclusions** that can be gained from this study: (1) Conscience alone is not a safe guide. This is clearly illustrated in the life of Paul. He had acted in complete accord with the counsel of his conscience. Yet there were large gaps in Paul's knowledge of God's will, and these produced serious consequences. Today, we must arm ourselves with a thorough knowledge of God's word if we hope to be pleasing to Him. This is the top priority!

(2) Neither is faith complete without a strong conscience bearing witness to the truth of God's will in our lives. To illustrate this, think of the numerous Christians who have great amounts of knowledge of the Bible - but who are unfaithful to their commitment to God. Why did they become unfaithful when they possess so much knowledge? Have they not disregarded the counsel of their consciences? And it was a gradual procedure. When they first began departing from God, the conscience sounded a shrill alarm. But with each offence, the level of the alarm diminished, until now many do not even hear. They have effectively silenced their consciences through repeated disregard!

(3) Failing to heed our conscience does tremendous damage, on two levels. There is the immediate damage to our bodies, and/or our souls by the committing of a sin. But there is also the more subtle damage done to our conscience. Never again will our conscience be quite so keen, so sensitive as before this occasion of neglect. And with the passing of time, and the continuing of such neglect, the conscience will give up its function of alarm altogether!

With time, any of us could learn to sleep through the warning of a smoke alarm. But what risk we take upon ourselves by so doing! Likewise, any of us may learn to "sleep" through the cries of an alarmed conscience.

T. HALL

### CALLING ON HIS NAME

Most of so-called Christendom is taught that since Romans 10:13, says, **"Whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved,"** then *alien sinners* need to pray for salvation.

Probably a large number of those who claim to be "New Testament Christians" know there is *something* wrong with that doctrine, and may be able to quote John 9:31, **"For we know that God does not listen to sinners,"** or Matthew 7:21, **"Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven."** But to many, this is too much like simply arraying one scripture against another, so you just take your choice of which one to believe, and overlook or reject the one that does not fit your preconceived notions. Of course, an honest Bible believer will take *all* the Bible says on any subject, and if one thing seems to conflict with another, will try to see wherein he can find harmony.

There needs to be an examination in more detail of what is involved in the expression, **"calling on the name of the Lord,"** and also its meaning when used in a

particular grammatical construction. Most of us surely know that words and phrases do not have absolute meanings apart from contexts and grammatical constructions.

It may be interesting and instructive to point out that even in our common English usage, "call on" means more than simply making a request for something. When a doctor calls on a patient, he does not merely drive by and say, "Hello in there! I wish you well!" He goes in and is involved with service. When I grew up, young men were said to "call on" young ladies. (I am not sure what they are said to do - or what they do - now.) But I was aware that to "call on" meant something different from merely to ask for some favour. But of course no Bible expression should be defined simply by an appeal to our common usage, though that may clarify or illustrate. Bible expressions should *always* be defined in terms of Bible usage. What do we find as we examine the sacred oracles?

### WHAT IT MEANS

When we find the expression in Romans 10:13, we immediately find in the following verses that "calling on" must have some prerequisites. One should not "call on" God in the scriptural sense without hearing and believing.

Let us examine briefly some other passages. In Zephaniah 3:9, we find **"that all may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him."** It appears that both in the Septuagint and in English, "to serve" (*tou douleuwein*) is in apposition to "call upon" (*tou epikaleisthai*). That is, "to call on" involves "serving him," not merely requesting something from him, or praying to him. You may note that this usage is very comparable to the illustration of the doctor calling on his patient - serving him - not merely asking him for payment of a bill.

Note again in Acts 9:14, Paul was reported to have asked for the authority to bind all who **"call upon the name of the Lord."** Paul was not persecuting those who simply *prayed*, but those who were *serving* the Lord.

In Acts 25:11, Paul uses the words, **"I appeal unto Caesar."** The words "appeal unto" are from *epikaloumai*, the same word translated "call upon." Paul did not simply say, "Caesar, save me!" He put his case into "Caesar's hands, submitting to Caesar's judgment and will." That, in a nutshell, is what "calling on the Lord" involves.

But let us probe a little deeper. In Acts 22:16, Saul was told to **"arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on His name."** Although this may be translated in some versions as if it were four imperatives: (1) Arise, (2) be baptized, (3) wash away thy sins, and (4) call on His name, they are not all imperatives in the original. "Arise" is a second aorist participle, which should be translated, "having arisen." "Be baptized" (*baptisai*) is a first aorist middle imperative as is "wash away" (*apolousai*). "Calling on" is not an imperative, but a present, passive participle (*epikaleasamenos*). Although I am neither a Greek nor English scholar, having forgotten much of what I thought I once knew, and do not even know a scholarly reference to uphold my conclusions, the best usage I remember is that the present participle, in both Greek and English, is generally used to modify the main verb, or show how the action is to be performed. In this case, it is a passive participle, and indicates how the two passive acts of submission to God which are mentioned are to be done.

(You may want to note here a sort of side issue which may be very enlightening. Some of our religious friends take the position that since we are saved by faith, baptism must be ruled out of our salvation since it is an act (work) which we perform. You may note that both verbs are *passive*. They do not relate to acts which we perform, but which are performed on or for us. Baptism is no more *our* work than washing away sins is our work. They both refer to things done for us.)



In the case before us, "calling on his name" is a present passive participle, and relates to how the submission to Christ was to be done. In other words, there could be no "calling on the name of the Lord" in the Bible sense without submitting to Christ - in this case by arising and being baptized and having sins washed away.

### CONCLUSION

Although my study has not been exhaustive, I have been unable to find any exception to these general principles in the Bible. In the 33 times the word is used in the New Testament, not one of them seems to have any clear reference to "praying to," but rather to such ideas as serving, submitting to, or by being surnamed, etc. It appears to be a general rule, also, that the active participle, when used with an imperative, always describes the manner in which the command was to be carried out. There may be some exceptions, but I am not aware of them.

It may also be interesting to note that this conclusion also fits very well with a logical or mathematical comparison. We learned in high school maths (or maybe earlier) that "things that are equal to the same things are equal to each other." Let us note how it works in this and other connections.

**"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"** (Mark 1:16).

**"He that calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved"** (Rom. 10:13)

Therefore, he that believeth and is baptized, and he that calleth on the name of the Lord are the same. It not, why not?

Again, notice the following:

**"Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven"** (Matt. 18:3).

**"Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven"** (John 3:5).

Therefore, being converted and being born of water and the Spirit involve the same things.

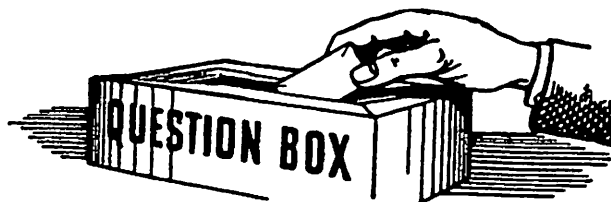
Repent - and be baptized - for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38).

Repent - and be converted - sins blotted out (Acts 3:19).

Therefore, to be baptized and to be converted involve the same things.

So, both logic and scriptural usage compel us to conclude that "calling on the name of the Lord" is not just prayer, but submission to and service for God.

T. BROWN




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Conducted by  
Frank Worgan

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(MELCHIZEDEK - cont. from last month.)

#### *Statements that Puzzle!*

The uniqueness of Melchizedek's priesthood is stressed in Heb. 7:3, where we find the statements, which create difficulty. It will help if, when we read this verse, we bear in mind that the writer is setting out the similarity between Melchizedek and the Lord Jesus, in order to show why Jesus is a priest "after the order ("taxin", meaning style or fashion") of Melchizedek."

*Firstly.* "Without father or mother or genealogy" does not mean that Melchizedek came into existence miraculously - without parents! It means that he had *no priestly*

*ancestry*, and that there were no genealogical records from which his right to serve as a priest could be established.

This reveals the difference between his priesthood and that of the sons of Aaron who came along later, when proof of ancestry was essential before a man could become a Levitical priest, and when the antecedents of a priest had to be established beyond doubt.

After the return from the Babylonian Captivity certain men wished to serve in the Temple, but were excluded from priesthood because their names could not be found among, "*those enrolled in the genealogies, so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean*" Neh. 7:64.

So important was this law that Heb. 7:14 tells us that even the Lord Jesus himself could not have been a priest during his earthly life, "*for it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priesthood.*"

*Secondly.* In any case, Melchizedek could not possibly serve as a *Levitical Priest*, because, as verse 10 points out, Aaron had not yet been born! The Aaronic priesthood was established centuries after the time of Melchizedek!

*Thirdly.* When we are told that he had "*neither beginning of days nor end of life*", it would be foolish to suppose this means that Melchizedek was not born and did not die! This refers to the length of his service as priest. It means that unlike the sons of Aaron who became priests, Melchizedek did not succeed anyone to his priestly office, nor was he himself succeeded in it by anyone. His priesthood was unique. As the 3rd verse states, he, "*abideth a priest continually*".

This draws our attention to the fact that, unlike the Aaronic priests, Melchizedek did not commence his ministry at a set age, nor was he compelled to retire at a set age. He had an "*abiding*", that is, a *continuing* priesthood.

Under the Law of Moses, a descendant of Aaron became an apprentice at 25 years of age, carrying the Tabernacle and performing similar menial tasks, and he became a full priest at 30 years of age.

God's law governing priesthood was extremely benevolent and was considerate of the heavy work involved in priesthood. That law stated that a priest must retire from service upon reaching the age of 50, although, if he wished and was able, he might continue to serve in a *voluntary* capacity, (Numbers 8:23-26).

Not so Melchizedek! There was no set time for his priestly ministry either to begin or to end, so that in this his service was altogether unique.

#### *The Lord Jesus - Like Melchizedek - King and Priest.*

Taking all of these facts into consideration, we see the wonderful similarity between Melchizedek and the Lord Jesus.

Neither had priestly ancestry.

Neither served for a set period.

Neither had successors in their particular ministry.

And in both, the offices of King and Priest were combined. Whilst Melchizedek was said to be king of Salem and priest of God Most High, concerning the Lord it had been prophesied, "*He shall be a priest upon his throne!*" Zech. 6:13.

Bear in mind that this was a prophecy that could not be fulfilled during his earthly ministry, since whilst on earth he could not have been a priest according to the Law of Moses under which he lived as a Jew. But, having ascended to heaven, he now reigns and mediates as King and Priest.

In the entire history of God's ancient people, no one was allowed to serve as both King and Priest at the same time. On the three-recorded occasions when kings intruded

into the priestly function, the consequences were catastrophic.

1. **1st Sam. 13**, King Saul presumed to offer a sacrifice, and lost his throne as a punishment.
2. **1st Kings 13**, King Jeroboam dressed himself as a priest and served at an altar to a god of his own making, and the punishment which followed resulted in the destruction of the entire House of Jeroboam.
3. **2nd Chron. 26**, King Uzziah entered the Temple and began to offer incense, and was struck with leprosy.

Down through the ages from the time of the unique Melchizedek, God held the offices of King and Priest apart until He should come of whom Melchizedek had been a symbol.

God declared that it was His intention that His own Son should combine in himself, the function of Kingship and Priesthood, when in **Psalm. 110:4**, He said,  
*"You are a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek".*

*(Questions to: Frank Worgan, 5 Gryfebank Way,  
 Houston, Renfrewshire, Scotland, PA6 7NZ)*

## KINDNESS

Kind hearts are the gardens,  
 Kind thoughts are the roots,  
 Kind words are the flowers,  
 Kind deeds are the fruits,  
 Take care of your garden,  
 And keep out the weeds;  
 Fill it with sunshine,  
 Kind words and kind deeds.

- Longfellow

Kindness is one of the most vital characteristics to the life that exemplifies Christ. Let's consider why.

Kindness was one of the forces moving God to sacrifice his Son for us. **"But when the kindness of God our Saviour and His love toward man, appeared not by works done in righteousness which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us"** (Titus 3:4,5a)

The apostle wrote, **"Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ"** (1 Cor 11:1). Among the shining qualities of that man of God to be imitated is **kindness**. Paul betrayed his kindly disposition in the first letter to the saints at Thessalonica. The apostle wrote, **"But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children"** (1 Thess, 2:7). In his tender affection for those brethren Paul and his companions held nothing back in their efforts to draw the saints even closer to Jesus Christ, but were **". . . well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls . . ."** (1 Thess. 2:8).

Kindness was such an outstanding feature of Paul's ministry that it is cited as evidence of his apostleship. The Bible says, **"But in everything commending ourselves as ministers of God, in pureness, in knowledge, in long suffering, in kindness . . ."** (2 Cor. 6:4,6a).

Love for both God and the brethren is fundamental to a properly lived Christian life, and in 1 Corinthians 13:4 one of the great characteristics of love is revealed: **"Love . . . is kind."** Love doesn't dwell in the heart of the continually harsh, caustic, critical saint, because kindness has no place in such a heart.

Christians are commanded to cultivate kindness. **“Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you”** (Eph. 4:32). Kindness is even identified by Peter as evidence of Christian maturity. In 2 Peter 1:5,7, the apostle presents those inspired stairsteps to Christlikeness. Near the peak of that pyramid of saintly graces, topped only by love, is **“brotherly kindness.”**

The New Testament presents kindness as a quality for which there is no substitute. If one were to make soundness, Bible study, use of talents, liberality and every other quality mentioned in the New Testament a part of one’s life, and neglect kindness, the fabric of his faith would be marred by a gaping hole. What is the conclusion of the matter? **“Put on therefore, as God’s elect, holy and beloved, a heart of . . . kindness”** (Col. 3:12a).

W. LANGFIELD

## THE SEVEN BEATITUDES OF REVELATION

Most folks are somewhat familiar with the beatitudes of Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. Each begins with the word **“blessed”** and the purpose is to emphasise the inner spiritual character of the true followers of the Son of God. Jesus said, **“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled”**; **“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God”**. Jesus ends the beatitudes upon the subject of persecution. **“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you”**. The hope of eternal life is strongly emphasised throughout.

Most folk are not so familiar with the series of seven beatitudes in the book of Revelation. These are like a golden thread woven into the fabric of the text beginning with chapter 1 an ending with chapter 22. Consider them:

**“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”** (1:3).

**“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they rest from their labours; and their works do follow them”**. (14:13).

**“Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”** (16:15).

**“Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.”** (19:9).

**“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and Christ, and shall reign with him for a thousand years”**. (20:6).

**“Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.”**

**“Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they might have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”** (22:14).

Why are there only seven beatitudes? Seven is a perfect number in Biblical interpretation. God created the world in seven days. Man’s allotted time upon earth is seventy years. The seven beatitudes of Revelation describe the maturity of Christian character in the face of adversity and hardship which reaches its ultimate fulfillment in heaven. We have a goal to strive for but one which will not be completely attained in this life. The apostle Paul said, **“This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward**

the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus". Our Lord and Saviour said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

J. H. WILSON

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Dec. 2	Zechariah 11	Matthew 27:1-25
Dec. 9	Psalm 22:1-18	Matthew 27:26-44
Dec. 16	2 Kings 13:10-25	Matthew 27:45-66
Dec. 23	Psalm 22:22-31	Matthew 28
Dec. 30	Psalm 97	Galatians 1

### JESUS' TRIAL

Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate by the chief priests and the scribes. They wanted Jesus convicted and condemned on a charge of sedition. The Roman Governor had authority to execute sentence of death.

Pilate will always be remembered for his encounter with Jesus. Peter later said of the Governor: "**The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his Son Jesus; whom you delivered up and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go**" (Acts 3:13). Matthew recorded: "**For he (Pilate) knew that for envy they had delivered him**" (27:18). He was under tremendous pressure from the Jewish leaders at this time and, no matter how hard he tried, he could not find a way to release Jesus. At one point, he thought Barabbas, the well-known insurrectionist, was the answer to his dilemma. "**But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus**" (20).

Pilate should have listened to his wife. She had told him to "**have nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things in a dream because of Him**" (19). We must remember this: "Dreams were considered as indications of the divine will, and

among the Romans and the Greeks, as well as the Jews, great reliance was placed on them" (Albert Barnes). I often wonder about the comments that were exchanged between Pilate and his wife in the days after the trial. I am sure they were very interesting.

What of the trial itself? What does it reveal? "It shows that a court organised to convict, and resorting to the most unscrupulous measures to effect their purpose, utterly failed to find in His conduct anything worthy of censure, much less anything worthy of death. His condemnation was based on His confession of that which He had always openly proclaimed, and which He had sustained by His life and His miracles. The man who betrayed Him into the hands of His enemies declared Him innocent, and the judge who pronounced the sentence of death declared Him, in the same breath, a just person. Never did such circumstances attend the death of any other man" (J. W. McGarvey).

### JESUS' CRUCIFIXION

The crucifixion of the Master, as detailed in the gospel records, should be read in conjunction with the many other passages of Scripture. "**And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross**" (Philippians 2:8). "**But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, the power of God and the wisdom of God**" (1 Corinthians 2:23-24). "**But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world**" (Galatians 6:14). "**For it pleased the Father that in Him**

should all fullness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself . . ." (Colossians 1:19-20). "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses: blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross . . ." (Colossians 2:13-14).

The ignominy of it all! Jesus was placed between two malefactors, as if He were a common criminal. I like the fact that Satan lost one of these men to the Lord (Luke 23:39-43). We read here also of the "vinegar...mingled with gall", which Jesus "would not drink" (34); the parting of His garments, which was the fulfilment of a prophecy found in Psalm 22:18 (35); the accusation placed by Pilate on the cross (37); the mocking of the spectators and the two malefactors crucified with Him (39-44); the darkness over the all the land from noon to 3 p.m. (45); the cries of Jesus (46, 50); His death (50); the rending of the veil in the temple (51); the earthquake (51); the resurrection of the bodies of the saints (52-53); and the confession of the centurion (54).

### JESUS' RESURRECTION

The Lord's enemies knew of the statement that He would rise again three days and three nights after His burial. "But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the great fish's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:39-40). They therefore placed a guard on His tomb. But they could not prevent the greatest fact in history - the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead. This

proved beyond any shadow of doubt that He was the Son of the Living God (Romans 1:4). One writer has commented: "Without His Resurrection the death of Christ would be of no avail and His grave would be the grave of all our hopes (1 Corinthians 15:17). A gospel of a dead Saviour would be a miserable failure and delusion. The Resurrection is the victory of righteousness and life over sin and death".

Paul later informed the Corinthian brethren that, among others, the resurrected Jesus was seen by "Peter, then of the twelve: after that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James; then all the apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (1 Corinthians 15:5-8).

These are facts and I accept them all. Why should I doubt them? What did His disciples have to gain in lying about their Master's Resurrection? Many went on to suffer persecution and martyrdom for the cause of Christ. Who in their right senses would suffer and die for a cause they believed to be false?

A spurious report went out to the effect that the followers of Jesus had stolen away the body (28:11-15). Bribery and corruption were afoot. It had some impact, especially among the Jews (15). Very often, people believe what they want to believe, despite the evidence to the contrary. I see the work of Satan here.

### PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS

There is no clear indication in Acts as to when Paul established the churches in Galatia. The letter which he subsequently addressed to them in c.53 A.D. deals with an impulsive and impetuous people, descendants of the headstrong and volatile Gauls from whom the country took its name. The purpose of

Paul's letter was to assert his apostolic character and authority and oppose Judaistic teaching. The key words are: *grace, faith, liberty* and *cross*. The key text is chapter 5:1: "**Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage**".

### CHAPTER ONE

In the first chapter, Paul is disturbed by the fact that some had troubled them with another gospel - a perverted gospel. He informs them that the gospel he preached to them was received as a Divine revelation and that he was a true apostle of God. Some events of his former life and of his early Christian life are detailed in the early verses of his epistle. They make fascinating reading.

The gospel I preach today must be the same gospel that Paul preached. To preach anything else is to preach a perversion of the gospel. Perversion can never lead to true conversion. Let us remember that there is only one gospel of Christ and "**it is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes; to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Gentile)**" (Romans 1:16). This is the gospel that once toppled the corrupt Caesars from their thrones and swept across the ancient pagan world like a prairie fire. Surely it can have a similar impact in the world today!

IAN S. DAVIDSON,  
Motherwell.

### TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

- In which country did Abraham obtain much of his wealth?
- What meal were the Israelites told to eat in haste?
- What happened to Achan and his family after they were stoned?
- Who was Isaac's stepmother?
- In which country did Esau's descendants live?
- For how many years did Zedekiah reign in Jerusalem?
- According to the book of Revelation, how many trumpets of judgement sounded?
- Where was Paul when he wrote the second letter to Timothy?
- In which of Paul's epistles do we read of "the man of sin"?
- In which of Paul's epistles do we find the name "Carpus"?

### EVANGELIST WANTED

The Slamannan District of Churches require an evangelist and all interested brethren should apply in writing to the District Secretary:-

Harry McGinn,  
6 Westpark Drive,  
New Cumnock, Strathclyde  
KA18 4LJ.

### COMING EVENTS

#### PETERHEAD:

"SING ALONG"

Saturday 3rd Nov. - 3pm

*Conducted by Kenneth Nisbet*

Tea & Evening Session 7pm

*All welcome.*

#### Special Saturday Night Meeting

At KIRKBY IN ASHFIELD

With Bro. Ernest Makin

16th March, 2002

at 7.00pm

#### KIRKCALDY LADIES DAY

18th May, 2002

*(Details later).*

#### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Robert and Fay Hughes now reside

at:-

24 Craigievar Gardens,  
Kirkcaldy, Fife,  
KY2 5SD.

**GHANA APPEAL**

We thank our brethren who have been so helpful, not only in extending the Lord's Church in Ghana, but also in alleviating sickness and hardship there. Without your help our Ghanaian brethren would still serve the Lord with the same devotion, but with it the results are much greater and we extend our appreciation to them as well. Together much has been achieved. There are different languages spoken in various parts of Ghana and we have received a number of requests for Bibles in some of these.

A leading brother in one congregation has made a plea for medical treatment for his mother who is ill and, at the same time asked for assistance for destitute widows. The congregation has been doing its best to help these sisters in their need but more is required. Can we help to relieve such hardship, particularly for widows with children?

Among the medical cases we have a sister in Christ who has such pain in her throat that she is now unable to eat. She has attended an Ear Nose and Throat hospital and has been told that an implant is necessary. This is obviously extremely urgent to avoid a slow painful death for this sister.

It is hard to watch a loved one suffer. Can we do what is necessary to help

such brethren in their distress?

Those wishing to help please make cheques payable to Dennyloanhead Church of Christ Ghana Fund and send to the treasurer: Mrs. Janet Macdonald, 12 Charles Drive, Larbert, Falkirk, Stirlingshire, FK5 3HB. Tel: 01324 562480.

**BREVITIES**

RECIPE for a better tomorrow: Give the best you have today.

Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible, and achieves the impossible.

It's hard to remove the beam from our own eye if our hands are full of stones.

We defend our friends in the same proportion that we love them.

Dishonesty is a forsaking of permanent for temporary advantages.

1. Egypt (Genesis 12:14-16).
2. Passover (Exodus 12:11).
3. They were burned (Joshua 7:25).
4. Kenah (Genesis 25:1).
5. Edom (Obadiah 1,8).
6. 11 (Jeremiah 52:1).
7. 7 (Revelation 8:6).
8. Prison (2 Timothy 2:9).
9. 2 Thessalonians.
10. 2 Timothy.

**ANSWERS**

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