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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 19 NUMBER 2

A publication of the... Churches of Christ

Founder: Christ – Mt. 16:18
Place: Jerusalem – Isa. 2:1-3, Acts 2:5
Time: A.D. 33 – Dan. 2:44, Acts 2
Head: Christ – Eph. 1:22
Organization:

Christ as head – Eph. 5:23
Elders oversee local church –
Heb. 13:17, Titus 1:5
Deacons as servants –
Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim. 3:8-13
Members compose body –
Col. 1:2

Name (group):
Church of God – Eph. 3:15
Body of Christ – Eph. 1:22-23
Churches of Christ – Rm. 16:16
Bride of Christ – Rm. 7:4

Name (individuals):
Disciples – John 15:8
Saints – Rm. 1:7
Brethren – Lk. 8:21
Children of God – Gal. 4:26
Christian – Acts 11:25-26

Creed: Jesus/Bible – Acts 8:37
Rule of Faith & Practice:
Word of God – 2 Tim. 3:16-17

Worship: Jn. 4:24
Sing – Eph. 5:19
Pray – Acts 2:42; 1 Thes. 5:17
Teach – Acts 5:42
Communion – 1 Cor. 1:23-26
Contribute – 1 Cor. 16:1-2

Mission: Save Souls – 1 Tim. 4:16
Warning: Be Faithful – 2 John 9

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I'm Looking for a Church That Is Not So...

Allen Webster

Many thousands of people search out a new church each year. They often research congregations in their area, ask around, and then personally visit the short list in a month of Sundays. Let's consider some common criteria.

"I'M LOOKING FOR A CHURCH THAT IS NOT SO DOGMATIC."

A caustic, callous, censorious approach does not draw men to Jesus—it repels them. A Savior lifted up on the cross is heaven's magnet (John 12:32). The church must present its message in love (Ephesians 4:15). It has no permission from a loving God to be hateful to the people He created (1 Peter 1:22; 2:17). No one wants to sit in a cold church—but warm and cozy is hard to leave.

Does this mean that a church should not stand strong for truth? No. Doctrine is important (John 8:24; 2 John 1:9-11). The church must teach all the counsel of God (Acts 20:27) whether it is popular or unpopular (2 Timothy 4:1-5). It is to defend the gospel (Philippians 1:17; Jude 1:3), not compromise it (Galatians 1:8).

Paul was both tolerant and dogmatic, loving and convicted. On the one hand,

he refused to cave to Jewish teachers who wanted to bind outdated laws. He "gave place, no, not for an hour" (Galatians 2:5). He was also gentle (1 Thessalonians 2:7), tearful (Acts 20:31), loving (Philemon 1:9), and willing to "spend and be spent" for others (2 Corinthians 12:15).

God desires His church to "comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men" but also to "warn them that are unruly" (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

So look for a church that speaks the truth—all of it—in love (Ephesians 4:15).

"I'M LOOKING FOR A CHURCH THAT IS NOT SO JUDGMENTAL."

Some grew up in homes with hard fathers and fault-finding mothers. Others are in dysfunctional, abusive relationships. Some have been judged unfairly by peers or society for so long that they long for a place where they can just be themselves. The last thing they are looking for is more of the same at church. Most just long to be loved—and none of us like to be criticized.

The church is composed of humble, kind people who know their imperfec-

tions. Like John (Revelation 21:1–3), all faithful Christians have a hopeful future, but many, like Paul, also have a regrettable past (Philippians 3:13). They have made their share of mistakes, dabbled in more sins than they care to remember, and battled addictions that haven't gone down easily. Since "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23), Christians understand, accept, encourage, and help each other.

Christians know that pointing a finger at others leaves three fingers pointing back at themselves. They long ago memorized Jesus' admonition, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1).

On the other hand, all of us should make judgments. The same Lord who said, "Judge not," also said, "Judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). Is this a contradiction? No, He doesn't forbid judging, but He does forbid unfair, hypocritical judging (Matthew 7:2–5).

The church announces the righteousness of God (Romans 1:16–17; 3:22–25; Hebrews 1:8). It trumpets holiness, values purity, and endorses clear ethical standards. It urges sowing to the Spirit, and discourages sowing to the flesh (Galatians 6:7–8). Therefore, some sermons will encourage us; others will convict us (Acts 2:36–38). We benefit from both.

So look for a church where you feel welcomed and loved—and challenged to grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:21–22; 2 Peter 3:18).

"I'M LOOKING FOR A CHURCH THAT DOESN'T HAVE TOO MANY RULES."

Surely a church has missed the mark if it does not teach and practice that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). Majoring in minors—meat and drink—can cause people to miss majors—rightness with God, peace with others, and joy in the heart. The weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, faith—can be missed while tithing spices (Matthew 23:23).

None bothered Jesus more than the Pharisees who made up rules for God and bound them on His people (Matthew 23:4, 13). They were classic legalists who thought conformity to law alone saved.

Paul wrote of them: "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3). Salvation is not of works of merit that men should boast (Ephesians 2:9). More than lip service must be given to the "spirit" of the law (2 Corinthians 3:6–11).

On the other hand, while rules are not an end in themselves, they are necessary. Commands give structure; rules lead to freedom. Anarchy is the child of lawlessness. No one wants to be part of an institution or society without rules.

God gave His Word to be loved, learned, understood, and obeyed—not ignored (James 1:21–25). The whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13; John 14:15; 15:10).

Obedience isn't legalism. Rather, obedience shows that we understand the spirit of the law (Psalm 111:10; 1 John 5:1–3). Christians are set free in Christ (Romans 14:1, 4), but ironically the way God gives liberty is through obeying the truth (John 8:24; 12:48–50; Romans 6:13–17). Submission is key to accessing God's spiritual treasures (Hebrews 5:8–9; Ephesians 2:8–9). The result (liberty) follows the cause (obedience). John wrote, "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (1 John 2:3–5).

So look for a church that practices both the spirit and the letter.

"I'M LOOKING FOR A CHURCH THAT IS NOT SO OLD-FASHIONED."

Americans love their gadgets; none of us want to return to rotary telephones or typewriters. We are connected; we don't want to go back to waiting for a letter to arrive in the mail. We are mobile; horses might be a fun weekend, but no one wants to ride one to work every day.

Why, then, would we want to go to a church that feels like we are stepping



back in time? Why read from a Book that our grandmothers read, sing a hundred-year-old song, or take up a religion that's been around for two thousand years?

Good questions, all. For those who haven't been in a while, we might point out that songs are still being written and that technology has arrived in most congregations. Members follow sermons on their tablets, view PowerPoints in Bible classes, find verses on smartphones, and listen to sermons on iPods.

At the same time, some things are always in fashion. Fulfilling man's basic needs does not go out of style. Every generation seeks out healthy vegetables, comfortable clothing, affordable lodging, and pure drinking water. Laughter, working, security, friends, learning, and relationships never go out of style.

So it is with the church. It meets the perennial human needs of soul food and salvation. It addresses the inner man that longs to understand the big picture and find meaning in life (Ecclesiastes 1; John 10:10). It builds character, helps with relationships, and prepares one for the afterlife (2 Peter 1:5–8; Ephesians 5:25–33; Matthew 25:31–46).

The original church has no successor; it needs none. Some things are more valuable with age. Antiques that originally sold for a few dollars may fetch thousands now. Land an ancestor purchased for a couple thousand may bring six figures. Established blue chip companies often make better investment sense than a start-up.

Perhaps the discussion is more nuanced than expected . . . the pool a little deeper than it looks on the surface. If this is the kind of church you are looking for, may we invite you to visit the church of Christ?

Be our guest on Sunday.

Go Ahead and Say It



One day a teacher asked her students to list on two sheets of paper the names of the other students in the room, leaving a space between each name. Then she told them to think of the nicest thing they could say about each classmate and write it down. It took the remainder of the class to finish, and as the students left the room, each handed in the paper. That Saturday, the teacher wrote down on a separate sheet of paper the name of each student, and listed what everyone else had said about that individual.

On Monday she gave each student his or her list. Before long, the entire class was smiling. “Really,” she heard whispered. “I never knew that I meant anything to anyone!” and, “I didn’t know others liked me so much,” were some of the comments.

No one ever mentioned those papers in class again. She never knew if they discussed them after class or with their parents, but it didn’t matter. The exercise had accomplished its purpose. The students were happy with themselves and one another. That group of students moved on.

Several years later, one of the students was killed in Afghanistan, and his teacher attended the funeral. She had never seen a serviceman in a military coffin before. He looked so handsome, so mature. The church was packed with his friends. One by one those who loved him took a last walk by the coffin. The teacher was the last in the line.

As she stood there, a soldier who was serving as pallbearer came up to her. “Were you Mark’s math teacher?” he asked. She nodded. Then he said: “Mark talked about you a lot.”

After the funeral, most of Mark’s former classmates went together to a luncheon. Mark’s mother and father were there, and waited to speak with his teacher. “We want to show you something,” his father said, taking a wallet out of his pocket. “They found this on Mark when he was killed. We thought you might recognize it.”

Opening the billfold, he carefully removed two worn pieces of notebook paper that had obviously been taped, folded, and refolded many times. The teacher knew without looking that the papers were the ones on which she had listed all the good things each of Mark’s classmates had said about him. “Thank you so much for doing that,” Mark’s mother said. “As you can see, Mark treasured it.”

Mark’s former classmates started to gather around. Charlie smiled rather sheepishly and said, “I still have my list. It’s in the top drawer of my desk at home.”

Chuck’s wife said, “Chuck asked me to put his in our wedding album.”

“I have mine too,” Marilyn said. “It’s in my diary.”

Vicki reached into her pocketbook, took out her wallet and showed her worn and frazzled list to the group. “I carry this with me at all times,” she said, and without batting an eyelash, continued, “I think we all saved our lists.”

That’s when the teacher sat down and cried. She cried for Mark and for all his friends who would never see him again. We all forget that life will end one day, and we don’t know when that one day will be.

Tell the people you love and care for that they are special and important. Tell them before it is too late.

“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.”

ROMANS 12:10

Three Tenses

Titus 2:11–13

1. Past Tense—God’s Grace has appeared to all men (2:11).
2. Present Tense—God’s Grace instructs us to leave sin and live righteously (2:12).
3. Future Tense—God’s Grace causes us to look for Christ’s coming (2:13).



Grave Inscription of a British Soldier

Here lies Captain Ernest Bloomfield.
Accidentally shot by his orderly,
March 2nd 1879. Well done, good and
faithful servant.

“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.”

PROVERBS 17:22



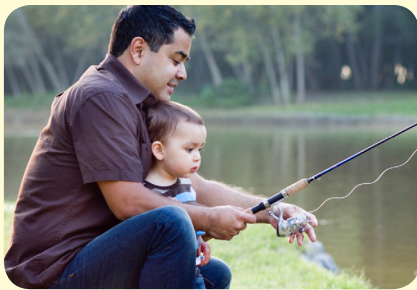
God’s Plan for Saving Man

God’s Grace	Ephesians 2:8
Christ’s Blood	Romans 5:9
The Holy Spirit’s Gospel	Romans 1:16
Sinner’s Faith	Acts 16:31
Sinner’s Repentance	Luke 13:3
Sinner’s Confession	Romans 10:10
Sinner’s Baptism	1 Peter 3:21
Christian’s Work	James 2:24
Christian’s Hope	Romans 8:24
Christian’s Endurance	Revelation 2:10



One Event: Two Accounts

In the diary of Brooks Adams is a note about a special day when he was eight years old. He wrote, "Went fishing with my father; the most glorious day of my life." Through the next forty years, there were constant references to that day and the influence it had on his life. Brooks' father was Charles Francis Adams, Abraham Lincoln's ambassador to Great Britain. He also had a note in his diary about the same day. It simply said, "Went fishing with my son; a day wasted."



Who Ate the Cookies?

A little boy had just polished off all the cookies in the kitchen. His mother came in, and seeing the empty jar and the crumbs, said to the wee lad, "Son, who ate the cookies?"

The little fellow replied, "An animal did."

"What kind of animal?" his mother asked.

The young lad was thoughtful for a moment. Then he smiled, "One of Jesus' little lambs."

"Beloved in the sight of my mother"

PROVERBS 4:3

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

What Are Your *Priorities*?

What priorities are established in our children when:

1. We are early to the game but late to worship?
2. We see that our children do their homework but never check to see if Bible lessons are completed?
3. They cannot stay up late on school nights, but they can stay up and watch the late show on Saturday night?
4. We will not let them miss school, even though they do not want to attend, but cater to their whims and let them miss Bible school?
5. We know the names of their school teachers, but we cannot call the names of their Bible class teachers?
6. We will serve as room mother or PTA president at school but cannot find time to help with a function in the Bible class?
7. We attend public school open house but not open house on last day of VBS?
8. We will not schedule vacations during public school, but will during VBS and gospel meetings?

9. They see us go to work, even though we do not feel too well, but stay home from church under the same circumstances?
10. They see us examine their school work but not pay any attention to their handwork brought from Bible classes?

—Wendell Winkler



Traits Passed from Parents to Children

A father, mother, and their three sons, John (the oldest), Mike (middle), and Steve (youngest), were conversing around the table after dinner.

The subject of traits of parents being passed on to children came up.

The father said, "John has my eyes, Mike has my creativity, and Steve has my intelligence."

Steve responded, "Daddy, what's intelligence?"



A Secret to Quiet Children in Church Service

A mother was having a difficult time getting her young son to be quiet during the preaching. Finally, she leaned over and whispered something to him. From that point on he sat still and was quiet as a mouse. A person who had observed this asked the mother after services if she would share what she had told her young son in order to get him to behave the way he did. She said, "I told him he was disturbing the preacher and if he lost his place in his lesson, he would have to start all over again."

"Rejoice."

PHILIPPIANS 4:4

Sola Scriptura

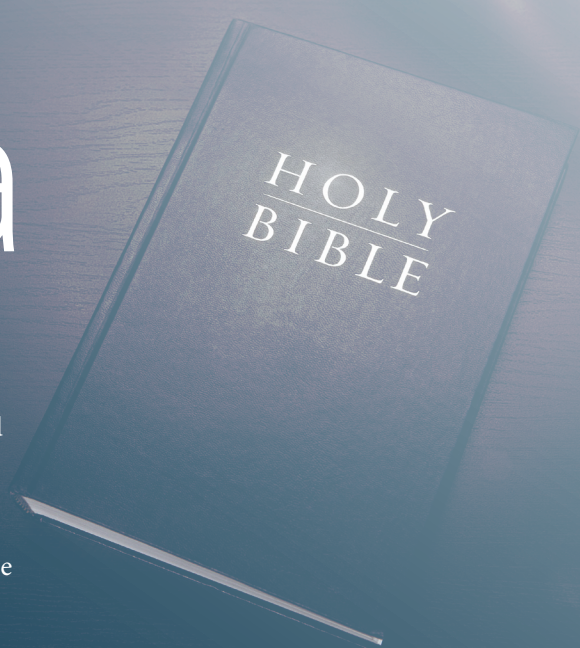
When Martin Luther rebelled against the “salvation of works” ethic of the Roman Catholic Church, he took the position of “sola scriptura” (Scripture only).

This brings up a vital question: “How shall one approach the Bible as one’s only authority in religion?” Luther opted for doing any moral and reasonable activity in religion or worship not specifically forbidden by the Bible. Another Reformation leader, the Swiss reformer Huldreich Zwingli, took a different approach. He decided to allow only what the Bible specifically approved, saying that the Scriptures are “the rule of faith and practice for Christians” and “the New Testament presents a normative pattern.”

Dirk Phillips in the sixteenth century book *Vindication* wrote, “It is evident that whatever God has not commanded

and has not instituted by express commands of Scripture, he does not want observed nor does he want to be served therewith, nor will he have his Word set aside nor made to suit the pleasure of men.” American Restoration leader Alexander Campbell wrote, “We choose to speak of Bible things by Bible words, because we are always suspicious that if the word is not in the Bible, the idea which it represents is not there; and always confident that the things taught by God are better taught in the words and under the names which the Holy Spirit has chosen and appropriated than in the words which man’s wisdom teaches.”

So, does silence approve or forbid? Peter wrote, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11). The “oracles of God” are the Old Testament (Romans 3:1–2) and the New Testament (2 Peter 3:1–2). Paul wrote,



“Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Colossians 3:17). Since to do something “in the name of the Lord” means to do it by His authority, clearly God wants us to have Bible authority for all we teach and practice.

A revolutionary concept!

To ask a Bible question or view previously answered questions, go to www.HouseToHouse.com.

Bible QUIZ VOLUME 19:2

Send us your answers (address on front) to receive a FREE Bible bookmark. We'll grade and return your questions and enclose the **You Can Trust Your Bible** bookmark as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

Questions Taken from the King James Version

Answers to Last Issue: Bible Places: 1. Beautiful (Acts 3:2); 2. Cave (1 Samuel 24:3–4); 3. Jordan (2 Kings 5:14); 4. Lystra (Acts 14:8, 19); 5. Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:6); 6. Milk, honey (Deuteronomy 6:3); 7. Fire (Lamentations 2:4); 8. Jordan (Matthew 3:13); 9. Rome (Romans 1:10); 10. Slaughter (Jeremiah 19:6); 11. Cedars (1 Kings 5:6); 12. House of Dagon (1 Samuel 5:2); 13. Emerods (1 Samuel 5:8–9); 14. Endor (1 Samuel 28:7); 15. Sabbath's day's journey (Acts 1:12); 16. Field of blood (Acts 1:19); 17. Damascus (Acts 9:3); 18. Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1); 19. Tarsus (Acts 11:25); 20. Asia (Acts 16:6).

Bible Events

Directions: Find your answers in 1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Chronicles 7:5; Acts 2:1,4; 9:25; 10:47–48; 13:6–11; 14:11–12; 16:26; 17:32; 20:9; 21:39; 22:26; 26:32; 27:42; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 6:2; 12:4; 1 Timothy 6:6; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7

1. In 1 Samuel 4, what did the Israelites bring to aid them against the Philistines? _____
2. “Godliness with contentment” is _____?
3. What animals did Solomon sacrifice to the Lord at the Temple's dedication? _____
4. When is the day of salvation? _____
5. Where did “a man” (Paul) visit where he heard unspeakable words not lawful for a man to utter? _____
6. Who will be with Jesus when He is revealed from Heaven? _____
7. Cornelius was commanded to _____ in the name of the Lord.
8. Who did the people of Lycaonia believe Paul was? _____
9. How were Paul and Silas freed from prison? _____
10. What idea did many Athenians mock? _____
11. When Christ returns, those who are saved will meet Him where? _____
12. Where must we all make an appearance? _____
13. On what day did the apostles first speak in tongues? _____
14. How did Saul escape from those who wanted to kill him in Damascus? _____
15. What did Paul do to Barjesus? _____
16. How did Eutychus die? _____
17. After his arrest, what did Paul ask of the chief captain? _____
18. Why did the chief captain refuse to torture Paul? _____
19. Why didn't Agrippa release Paul? _____
20. What did the soldiers want to do to the prisoners when the ship ran aground? _____

—adapted from <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/>

Old Testament Statistics

39 books
 929 Chapters
 23,145 Verses
 Smallest book: **Obadiah**
 Largest book: **Psalms**
 Middle book: **Proverbs**

Shortest verse: 1 Chronicles 1:25
 Longest verse: Esther 8:9
 Longest chapter: **Psalms 119**
 —Information from BibleWorks software

"I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word."
 PSALM 119:16



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Recommended Resource



If you are looking for audio Bible study materials, we recommend you check out Audio Evangelism. With hundreds of study topics presented in a professional manner, you can request CDs to enjoy in your vehicle as you go to work or take a trip, or you can download files to listen at your convenience on your computer. Check them out at www.audioevangelism.com.

I want to learn more about the Bible!

Name: _____

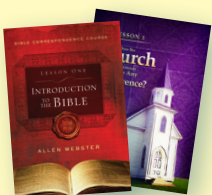
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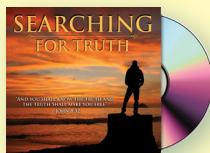
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Prayer requests or comments: _____

I want:



A Bible Correspondence Course



DVD Bible Study



I would like to have an in-home Bible study

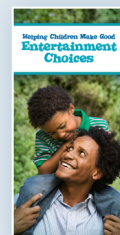
New Tracts!



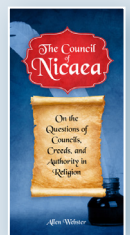
Do You Think You Are the Only Ones Going to Heaven?



In Pursuit of Focus



Helping Children Make Good Entertainment Choices



The Council of Nicaea

More subjects:



For Men Only: Solomon's 11 Reasons to Avoid Loose Women



God's Lamb in the Devil's Zoo



God's View of Abortion



Grandparenting



How to Get a Good Night's Sleep



Can God Really Forgive Me?



Can We Let Our Conscience Be Our Guide in Religion?



Curiosity May Have Killed the Cat... But it Saved Zacchaeus

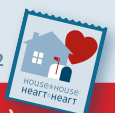


Death Hurts, but Jesus Helps



Did Jesus Make Intoxicating Wine?

Don't see the topic you need? Visit www.housetohouse.com for more subjects.



NOAH BY THE NUMBERS

NOAH lived 950 years, and was 600 years old when he and his family went inside the ark (Genesis 7:11; 9:28–29)



THE ARK (Genesis 6:15–16)

45 ft high (3 stories tall)

1 door

1 window

They stayed in the ark for 1 year and 10 days (Genesis 8:14–18)

450 ft long, 75 ft wide (Genesis 6:15)

8 PEOPLE

were saved
(1 Peter 3:20)



40

Rain fell on the earth for 40 days and nights (Genesis 7:12)

ANIMALS (Genesis 6:19–20; 7:2–3)

7 of every clean animal and bird, male and female
2 of every unclean animal, male and female



TIMELINE The flood came 1,656 years after creation and 2,348 years before Christ

Never Was There a King like Jesus

Ephraem of Syria observed the following of Jesus: “You are the heir to King David’s throne, but you renounced all of his royal splendor. Of all his luxurious bedrooms, you chose a stable. Of all his magnificent beds, you chose a feeding-trough. Of all his golden chariots, you chose an ass. Never was there a king like you! Instead of royal isolation, you made yourself available to everyone who needed you. Instead of high security, you made yourself vulnerable to those who hated you.”

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

2 CORINTHIANS 8:9



Jesus Loves Me

In circa 1860, Anna B. Warner penned the following words that were later extended and set to music by William B. Bradbury and continue to be sung around the world:

Jesus loves me—this I know,
For the Bible tells me so:
Little ones to him belong—
They are weak, but he is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me,
The Bible tells me so.

While often considered a children's Bible School song, these words are nevertheless profound. When Karl Barth (1886–1968), the famous Swiss theologian, visited the United States in 1962 and lectured at Princeton Theological Seminary and the University of Chicago, he was asked to summarize all the millions of words he had written. He is reported to have thought for a moment and then replied, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so."

God's love for sinful humanity is the Bible's theme. At the heart of the gospel is God's gift of Jesus Christ to all the world as the atoning sacrifice for sin. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). The tremendous truth expressed here in what has often been called the Golden Text of the Bible is reiterated throughout the pages of the New Testament. Consider the following:

"God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). —Hugh Fulford



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