

HOUSE TO HOUSE

Heart to Heart



“... from house to house... with gladness and singleness of heart...” (Acts 2:46).

Volume 9, Number 3

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

If you have questions or comments please contact
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My grace is sufficient
for thee: for my strength
is made perfect in
weakness...



II Corinthians 12:9

Recognition

Allen Webster

Because the Jews had defended it so fanatically, the Roman general Pompey was anxious to see what was in the temple's most sacred room, the Holy of Holies. He was surprised to find it *empty*. He wondered why so many Jews had died to defend an empty room!¹ He didn't understand the concept of a God "eternal, immortal, invisible" (1 Timothy 1:17). Worship is about recognition. It is the time in a Christian's week when he remembers the majesty of his God. It is the time she acknowledges the greatness of her God's character and deeds. It is the time when God's people as a group acknowledge and fulfill one of His strongest desires. The Bible commands: "...acknowledge him..." (Proverbs 3:6).

WE MUST RECOGNIZE THE DISTANCE BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

In the year that king Uzziah died, Isaiah saw "...the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up..." (Isaiah 6:1). Worshipers do not come before God on a horizontal field. One does not approach his Creator as he does his buddy at the ball field or her friend on the telephone. God corrected those who "...thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself..." (Psalm 50:21). It is a vertical plane that we ascend to be in God's presence. Isaiah shows our approach is vertical in both (1) position ("high," "lofty") and (2) moral ("holy") terms: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place..." (Isaiah 57:15a).

In terms of position, "...God is in heaven, and thou upon earth..." (Ecclesiastes 5:2; cf. Psalm 2:4; 68:4; 113:5; 115:3; 123:1; Ephesians 1:20, 21). We pray: "Our Father which art in heaven..." (Matthew 6:9). "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9). Even God's name is "exalted"² (Isaiah 12:4).

In terms of morality, the Bible contrasts God's absolute holiness (high) with man's sinfulness (low). "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts... Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips..." (Isaiah 6:3, 5). God wants us to recognize our condition before coming before Him: "Only acknowledge [recognize] thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD...and ye have not obeyed my voice..." (Jeremiah 3:13; cf. 14:20; 24:5; Hosea 5:15). "Likewise reckon [recognize] ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11). Only the worshiper who recognizes this distance and manifests the corresponding humble attitude is allowed to approach the divine Being: "...with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 57:15b).

The primary Old Testament word for worship (*shachah*) means "to bow down; to prostrate one's self; to do obeisance" (cf. Genesis 24:52; Exodus 4:31). When Albert Thorwaldsen completed his famous statue of Christ, he invited a friend to see it. The Danish sculptor had created a portrayal of Christ with his arms outstretched and his head bowed. The friend looked and said, "I can't see his face." Thorwaldsen replied, "If you want to see the face of Christ, you must get on your knees." Only when God's servants humble themselves in worship to God can we see Him clearly.

WE MUST RECOGNIZE OUR DEPENDENCE UPON GOD.

When one becomes impressed with the truth of God's majesty, then he naturally feels weak and insignificant. In the divine presence, Isaiah said, "Woe is me" and was "undone"³ (Isaiah 6:5). The Psalmist expressed it this way: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (8:4, 5).⁴ The recognition is accurate—we are totally dependent upon God. An appropriate worship song is, *I Need Thee Every Hour*, for worship is an acknowledgment to God that we recognize He is our provider, sustainer, redeemer—our very existence totally depends upon Him. It is in God that we "live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28; cf. Luke 20:38). David saw men as being in God's sling, which could be slung out of its middle at any time (1 Samuel 25:29). By Christ "all things consist" (Colossians 1:17); He upholds "all things by the word of his power" (Hebrews 1:3). God hath life in Himself (John 5:26); He is the very fountain of life (Psalm 36:9). Job put it simply: "In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind" (12:10).

A TRUE WORSHIPPER RECOGNIZES GOD'S DESIRE TO BE WORSHIPPED.

Worship may not mean much to us, but it is a "big thing" to God. A visit home with the grandchildren may seem like more trout than it is worth to parents, but to grandparents that visit is the highlight of the week (or perhaps the year). If we could ascribe to God such humanlike terms, we might say, "Worship is the highlight of God's week." To borrow the language of Solomon's love song,⁵ we can almost hear God saying at worship time: "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely" (Song 2:14). The eternal Father takes "...pleasure⁶ in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy" (Psalm 147:11). A Christian's prayers "delight" God (Proverbs 15:8). The Father "seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23).

In the Old Testament, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders were told to worship "afar off" (Exodus 24:1); but now we are invited to "draw near⁷ to God" (Hebrews 7:19; 10:22). We may even come "boldly" to His throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16).⁸

When one goes by the Washington Monument, he cannot help but look up; his glance rises 550 feet. Similarly, when we glimpse God in the distance, we cannot help but want to go up in worship.

Endnotes:

¹Robert C. Shannon, 1000 Windows. (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1997).

²*sagab*, "inaccessible; high, lofty."

³*damah*, "to be dumb or silent; hence to fail or perish; be brought to silence..."

⁴God, though, does not consider man insignificant. He made man in His own image (Genesis 1:26, 27). He paid the highest price for our fellowship—the humiliation, suffering, and separation of His Son (Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; Matthew 27:46). We are constantly in His thoughts (Psalm 40:5). He values our worship.

⁵Some see this as a picture of God's love relationship with His church.

⁶Interestingly, this word (*ratsah*) can also mean "to satisfy a debt" which reminds us of how much we owe God and how little He asks of us in return.

⁷*proserchomai*, "to approach, visit, worship."

⁸There are stipulations, of course. We must come through our High Priest and Mediator, Christ (Hebrews 4:15, 15; 1 Tim. 2:5). We must come with clean hands and pure hearts (James 4:8).

THINK ON GOOD THINGS

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

Occupation Hymns



Astronaut: "Nearer My God, To Thee"
Baker: "I Need Thee Every Hour"
Barber: "A Parting Hymn We Sing"
Baseball Batter: "Seek Thee First"
Builder: "How Firm A Foundation"
Carpenter: "The Nail Scarred Hand"
Civil Engineer: "When I Survey The Wondrous Cross"

Dentist: "Crown Him With Many Crowns"
Electrician: "Send The Light"
Fisherman: "Shall We Gather At The River?"
Golfer: "There Is A Green Hill Far Away"
Historian: "Tell Me The Old, Old Story"
IRS: "All To Thee (I Owe)"
Librarian: "We've A Story To Tell"
Lifeguard: "Come To The Water"
Mathematician: "10,000 Times, 10,000 Times"
Medical Technician: "Revive Us Again"
Mountain Climber: "The Rock That Is Higher Than I"
Obstetrician: "He Is Able To Deliver Thee"
Optometrist: "Open Mine Eyes That I Might See"
Philosopher: "I Am Thinking Today"
Politician: "Standing On The Promises"
Real Estate Agent: "I've Got A Mansion"
People Builder: "Lift High The Cross"
Stonecutter: "Rock Of Ages"
Switchboard Operator: "A Call Comes Ringing"
Trucker: "On The Highways And Byways Of Life"
Voice Teacher: "Sing Them Over Again To Me"
Watchmaker: "Take Time To Be Holy"
Watchman: "Silent Night"
Weatherman: "There Shall Be Showers Of Blessings"

BIG Payday!

While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my four-year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers, and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, "The tooth fairy will never believe this!"

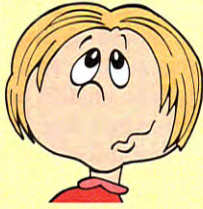
"Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop; but a good word maketh it glad" —Proverbs 17:22

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



The Crooked Smile



As we rolled five-year-old Mary into the MRI room, I tried to imagine what she must be feeling. She had suffered a stroke that left half of her body paralyzed, had been hospitalized for treatment of a brain tumor, and had recently lost her father, her mother, and her home. We all wondered how Mary would react.

She went into the MRI machine without the slightest protest, and we began the exam. At that time, each imaging sequence required the patient to remain perfectly still for about five minutes. This would have been difficult for anyone—and certainly for a five-year-old who had suffered so much. We were taking an image of her head, so any movement of her face, including talking, would result in image distortion.

About two minutes into the first sequence, we noticed on the video monitor that Mary's mouth was moving. We heard a muted voice over the intercom. We halted the exam and gently reminded Mary not to talk. She was smiling and promised not to talk.

We reset the machine and started over. Once again we saw her facial movement and heard her voice faintly. What she was saying wasn't clear. Everyone was becoming a little impatient; a busy schedule that had been put on hold to perform an emergency MRI on Mary.

We went back in and slid Mary out of the machine. Once again, she looked at us with her crooked smile and wasn't upset in the least. The technologist, perhaps a bit gruffly, said, "Mary, you were talking again, and that causes blurry pictures." Mary's smile remained as she replied, "I wasn't talking. I was singing. You said no talking." We looked at each other, feeling a little silly.

"What were you singing?" someone asked. "Jesus Loves Me," came the barely perceptible reply. "I always sing 'Jesus Loves Me' when I'm happy."

Everyone in the room was speechless. Happy? How could this little girl be happy? The technologist and I had to leave the room for a moment to regain our composure as tears began to fall.

Many times since that day, when feeling stressed, unhappy, or dissatisfied with some part of my life, I have thought of Mary and felt both humbled and inspired. Her example made me see that happiness is a marvelous gift—free to anyone willing to accept it.

"Rejoice evermore." —1 Thessalonians 5:16

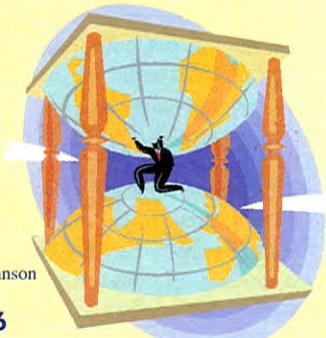
No Time Today

I haven't time today, dear Lord, tomorrow I'll give to Thee.
 So many things, so much to do, today I must work for me.
 I know I promised this day, Lord, but something has changed my plans.
 The car needs washing, the yard's a mess, and I need to see a man.

So sorry, dear Lord, had a call just now, some relatives in town you see,
 Tomorrow I'll make it up to you, Tomorrow, I'll give to thee.
 Tomorrow—it never seems to come,
 The work of the Lord is left undone.
 If troubles should come to us today,
 Suppose the Lord turned His face away.

He might ignore our earnest plea
 With words familiar in our ears could ring,
 "Today I'm so busy with other things,
 Tomorrow, dear one, I might listen to thee."

—Frances Johnson



"Redeeming the time..." —Ephesians 5:16

The



HOME PAGE

The Note in the Glove Box

Recently I heard a story which really struck home. Apparently a woman was driving her husband's classic BMW for a special appointment downtown. That car had been his life and joy. He spent hours finding original replacement parts, tuning the engine, fixing minor dents, and waxing the car. He worked on it a little time every Saturday and many evenings, but the car was a beauty.

As she drove the car, she thought what a joy it was, but suddenly someone changed lanes and nearly pulled into her. To avoid crashing she swerved to the right just as a big truck drove up beside her. She demolished the bumper and dented the fender of her husband's car. What would he say? How could he ever forgive her? If she had only been a little more careful...

Shortly a policeman arrived to take an accident report. She got out her driver's license and reached into the glove compartment to get the insurance papers and title. To her surprise there was another smaller envelope inside with her name on it. The writing was her husband's. A fearful sweat suddenly hit her. What would it say? He had often warned her about driving more carefully. She opened the letter and began to read it.

Dear Laurie,

If you are reading this, you have likely had an accident. Don't worry. I trust this means you are all right, and that is what really matters to me. Don't worry about the car, it's only metal and rubber and plastic. You are what really matters to me.

I love you. James

What a wise husband! He strengthened his wife's love and admiration for him and his marriage and his potential for happiness and his self-respect and his... well, you see that it was a wise investment.

Is there room for a note in your glove box?

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it ... So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." —Ephesians 5:25, 28

Play "Catch" with Your Children

God's wisdom is seen in His stressing the importance of instilling in children the truths of His Word at an early age (Proverbs 22:6; Deuteronomy 6:4-7). The man will be as the child is trained. By exposing children to a large quantity of Bible teachings in their early years, we can be instrumental in programming their "mental computers" so that they know the mind of God and think as He does.

Truth is as much the natural staff of life for the soul as bread is for the body. The soul cannot be strong and healthy without it. Ignorance is the starvation of the soul; error is its poison; truth is its food and healing medicine. The very highest truths are those which should be imparted at the earliest possible period in a child's history. It is important that as soon as a child's mind can admit the thought, it should be taught concerning Him who made it and all things, and who rules in heaven and on earth. You may train a fruit-tree by tying it to a railing; but the tree whose branches have nothing to lean on but air is not trained at all (Proverbs 29:15). It is a question between the Bible as a standard, and no standard at all.

Much of what parents are able to teach children is what is "caught" rather than "taught." Children are far less influenced by precept than by example. Our character is a stream, a river flowing down upon our children hour by hour. What we do here and there to carry an opposing influence is, at best, only a ripple that we make on the surface of the stream; it reveals the sweep of the current, nothing more. If we expect our children to go with the ripple instead of the stream, we shall be disappointed.

Example teaches without a tongue. Precept may point the way, but example carries us along. The common saying of "Do as I say, not as I do," is usually reversed in the actual experience of life. All persons are more apt to learn through the eye rather than the ear, and whatever is seen makes a deeper impression than what is read or heard.

Whatever children see they unconsciously imitate. Thus it is important that parents set a good example for their children; that grandparents set a good example for their grandchildren. They must live near to God. The influence of a parent or grandparent on the child should make it "easier to be holy than to be sinful, to do good than to do evil, to sacrifice than to enjoy." Solomon said, "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness" (Proverbs 16:31). What you are, he will be.

Some do not get better with age; they get worse. Some begin to murmur and complain (cf. Philippians 2:14). They tend to exaggerate their problems and minimize their blessings. Someone said, "The older a man gets, the farther he had to walk to school as a boy." At the funeral of a man prominent in the community, I overheard some elderly women talking about the deceased. "It's really too bad about him," one said. "He had the same thing I've got, only mine's a lot worse." We should try to avoid this attitude, for it will not set the right example for the next generation. The road to success is always under construction, but a gray-headed Christian is something worth imitating.

—Author Unknown

We Don't Advise This End to an Argument

A man left work one Friday afternoon. But instead of going home, he stayed out the entire weekend playing golf with the boys and spending his entire paycheck. When he finally appeared at home, Sunday night, he was confronted by his very angry wife and was barraged for nearly two hours with a tirade for his actions. Finally his wife stopped the nagging and simply said to him, "How would you like it if you didn't see me for two or three days?" To which the husband replied: "That would be fine with me."

Monday went by and he didn't see his wife.

Tuesday went by and he didn't see his wife.

Wednesday came and went with the same results.

Finally on Thursday the swelling went down just enough so he could see her a little out of the corner of his left eye.

"Be ye angry, and sin not..." —Ephesians 5:26

Home-Spun Wisdom

Troubles in marriage often start when a man gets so busy earning his salt that he forgets his sugar.... Too many couples marry for better or for worse, but not for good.... When a man marries a woman, they become one—but the trouble starts when they try to decide which one! ... Remember just because many couples "harp at each other" does not mean that their marriage is made in heaven!

"A merry heart doeth good..." —Proverbs 17:22





What Happened on the "long day" of Joshua 10?



The "long day" of Joshua 10:12-14 is one of several miracles in the Book of Joshua. The "long day" was a day that is unique in human history. "And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel" (Joshua 10:14).

The passage emphasizes that Joshua and Israel achieved victory because of the prayer of Joshua and the power of God. The Book of Joshua describes the conquest of the promised land by the Israelites. The battle of Joshua 10 came as the result of a pact made between the Israelites and the Gibeonites.

As Israel came to aid the Gibeonites who were under attack by the Amorites, Joshua sought the Lord's aid. God rained down huge hailstones on the Amorites, so that "they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword" (10:11). After the miraculous intervention of God, Joshua "said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon" (10:12). So "the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day" (10:13). (The Book of Jasher, an ancient book that is lost and unknown to us, has never been considered a book of inspired Scripture.)

Scientifically speaking, this miracle, as is true with all miracles, is difficult to explain. The nature of miracles is such that they are outside the normal course of things, and as acts of God are to be accepted whether or not they can be "explained." The problem with this particular miracle is that if the rotation of the earth stopped, it would not just have an effect at this battlefield, but would have catastrophic consequences for the whole earth. David said, "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1).

Since God created the world, He certainly would have it within His ability to either stop or slow the rotation of the earth in such a gradual way that Joshua's "long day" might have been forty-eight hours rather than the normal twenty-four. The text does not demand a sudden "standing still" of the sun.

Other explanations of how God might have caused a long day include a miraculous tilting of the earth on its axis or a miraculous refraction (bending) of the sun's rays so that daylight continued for many hours beyond a normal day. (The normal tilting of the earth's axis today produces twenty-four periods of sunlight near the north pole.) There are also old Egyptian, Hindu, and Chinese sources that suggest observation of a "long day" by ancient astronomers. While there likely are other good ways to visualize how God accomplished this miracle, one must remember that the "long day" of Joshua was unique. There has never been another day in history such as that one. That day was a demonstration of the omnipotence of God, and His care for His people lead by a godly man who remembered the power of prayer.

—Bob Prichard, P. O. Box 3071, Oxford, AL 36203



Send your answers to the address on the front. We'll grade and return all entries and randomly select one to receive a Bible, New Testament cassettes, or Bible Dictionary.

Name: _____

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Questions Taken from the King James Version

The Death and Resurrection of Christ

Find answers in Matthew 15:43; 26:40; Mark 15:15; Luke 22:50; 23:39-41, 46; John 19:25; 20:2; Acts 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:5.

1. How long was Jesus seen by the apostles after His Resurrection? _____
2. One of those with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his _____.
3. To whom was Jesus speaking when He asked, "Could you not watch with me one hour?" _____
4. Who asked Pilate for the body of Jesus? _____
5. How many women named Mary stood by the cross of Jesus while He was being crucified? _____
6. On one occasion, the resurrected Jesus was seen by more than _____ brethren at once.
7. Who said that the men crucified with Jesus received the due reward for their deeds? _____
8. To Whom did Jesus commit His spirit? _____
9. To whom was Mary Magdalene talking when she said, "They have taken away the Lord?" _____
10. What did Pilate hope to accomplish by releasing Barabbas and delivering Jesus to be crucified? _____

Marriages and Weddings

Genesis 24:64-65; 34:8-9; Exodus 21:9; Numbers 12:1; 1 Samuel 1:2; Hosea 1:2; Matthew 22:7, 30; John 2:1-10; 1 Corinthians 7:33.

1. What bride-to-be saw her future husband and covered herself with a veil? _____
2. What miracle did Jesus perform at a marriage feast? _____
3. In Jesus' parable, what did the king do to those who refused to attend his son's wedding? _____
4. If a Hebrew's female slave became engaged to marry his son, the master was obligated to treat her after the manner of _____.
5. God commanded _____ to marry a sexually-immoral woman.
6. What advantage did Peninnah have over her husband's other wife? _____
7. What requests did Hamor make to Jacob? _____
8. What did Miriam and Aaron criticize about Moses' marriage? _____
9. Do angels get married in heaven? _____
10. A married man cares for the things of the _____, how he may _____ his wife.

—John Gaines, Pensacola, Florida

Answers to Last Issue: Seven Habits of Highly Effective Christians: 1. Faith; 2. virtue; 3. charity (love); 4. temperance; 5. brotherly kindness; 6. godliness; 7. patience; **Seven Names Jesus Called the Scribes/Pharisees:** 1. Guides; 2. fools; 3. supulchres; 4. serpents; vipers; 5. hypocrites; 6. graves. **Who Dared Ask God?** 1. Moses (Exodus 5:22); 2. Elijah (1 Kings 17:20); 3. Abraham (Genesis 15:2); 4. Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16:22); 5. Solomon (1 Kings 3:5-9); 6. Moses (Exodus 3:13); 7. David (1 Samuel 30:3-8); 8. The Israelites (Judges 21:2-3); 9. Moses (Exodus 17:3-4); 10. Joshua (7:7).





“Study to show thyself approved unto God...” —2 Timothy 2:15

All Kinds of Surprises in the Bible!

A man was helping his wife with the dishes for the fourth time that week, and he was tired of doing the dishes. “You know,” he said, “this isn’t really man’s work. I’m just trying to be helpful.” His wife answered, “You’re wrong, and the Bible says so.” She then told him to read 2 Kings 21:13, which reads, “I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down.” Well, you never know what you may find when you read the Bible, do you? There just may be a whole lot more that you never knew was there. It is worth spending time finding out!



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In the Interest of Christian

UNITY

Restoring a Thing of Value



Lovely works of art are often marred by accumulations of dirt and grime. Specialists are employed to restore them to their original beauty. They carefully remove the foreign matter that obscures their true nature. Fine furniture can become worn and damaged. Its beauty is hidden by tattered upholstery and layers of paint.

To see it as it came from the hands of the artisan, it needs to be restored by a skilled workman. The paint and ragged upholstery need to be stripped away.

Christianity is two thousand years old. Its modern appearance is greatly marred and distorted by the accumulation of human doctrines and practices imposed upon it over the ages. A careful reading of the New Testament provides one with an accurate picture of Christianity as it came from the hands of Jesus. Comparing that with modern "versions of Christianity" reveals a stark difference. Hardly a single teaching or practice of the original faith has been untouched. Human hands have defiled and marred its beauty with their changes. But as with the work of art or the fine furniture, we restore the church to its original simplicity and beauty.

First we look to the New Testament of Christ to determine just how He intended the church to be; what she was to believe; how she was to worship. We then resolve that we will follow those guidelines faithfully. Each item of faith and practice must be examined carefully in light of Christ's word. Anything not as old as the New Testament must be discarded. Anything that has been left out or neglected must be put back in its proper place.

We must be willing to endure the complaints, criticisms, and ridicule of those who love their human traditions more than they do the original faith of Christ. We must be prepared to be a minority because Jesus said, "Many are called but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). We must resolve to hold fast to that which we find to be true lest we let it slip from us (Hebrews 2:1). The labor will be intense, the cost will be high, but when we have done the necessary work of restoring, we will possess the pure and holy church of Christ which He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28). We will have found the way that is right, which cannot be wrong.



Things About the Church of Christ that Surprise People

ANY CHRISTIAN CAN BAPTIZE AND A PERSON CAN BE BAPTIZED AT ANY TIME.

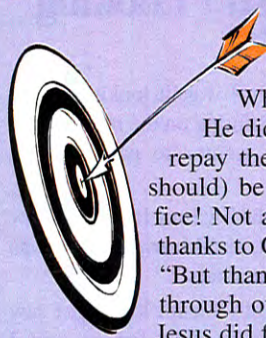
Most people believe that a preacher must baptize them or it does not "count." This doctrine comes out of medieval church tradition; the Bible places no such restriction on baptism. If a man can teach another what to do to be saved, then he can also baptize him. The great commission applies to all equally (Matthew 28:19-20). Many people, following a Bible study with Christian friends, are surprised to find out that they do not have to wait to be baptized. They figure that there will be a special "baptismal service" at the end of the month or six months. In the New Testament, it is clear that in every case when people wanted to be baptized, there was no waiting (Acts 2:41; 8:36-38; 10:47-48; 16:14-15, 33-34).



Tell Me More About

JESUS

Jesus' Life in Four Words



What Jesus did for you and me was an incredible demonstration of genuine love.

What Jesus did for us, we do not deserve. What He did for us was an act of grace. We could never repay the debt that we owe Him. But, we can (and should) be grateful for Him and His life-giving sacrifice! Not a day should pass without us expressing our thanks to God for what His Son has done on our behalf. "But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57). Jesus did four amazing things for us.

HE CAME. He came from heaven to earth. He Himself said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). In heaven Jesus shared in the glory of the Father "before the world was" (John 17:5), but He left heaven to come to earth. Why? "...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). Let us admit it without shame: if Jesus had not come, we could not be saved from our sins. Consider some of the beautiful words of the song "He Still Came:"

Yet the King of kings left heaven to become a lowly man,
He left all heaven's glory to fulfill His Father's plan.
He still came just for me, He still came.
Knowing all He would endure, He still came.
Disregarding every cost, from the manger to the cross,
He still came just for me, He still came.

HE WENT. He went to the cross. When the mob came to take Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, He could have called "twelve legions of angels" (72,000) to protect Himself (Matthew 26:53), but He did not. Jesus had the power to run away from the interrogations of the Jewish council, Pilate, and Herod, but He chose not to do so. Instead, He endured mockery, physical and mental torture, and with the help of Simon carried His cross "to the place which is called Calvary; there they crucified him" (Luke 23:33). Why did our loving Lord go to the cross when He could have avoided it? The Bible's answer is plain: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). If Jesus had not gone to the cross, we would still be hopelessly lost!

HE STAYED. He stayed on the cross. After He was crucified, He hung on the cross for six hours (Mark 15:25, 34-37). While He was still hanging there, some mockingly spoke these words of blasphemy: "Save thyself, and come down from the cross...He saved others; himself he cannot save" (Mark 15:30, 31). Did Jesus have the power to come down from the cross? Of course! But He stayed right there until the end. Why? Because of His great love for us and because He knew that in God's plan, His death was a necessity.

HE RETURNED. He returned to heaven, where He sat down at the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19). He went "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24). Upon His return to heaven, He was given "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom" (Daniel 7:13, 14). There He "ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Hebrew 7:25).

May we ever thrill at the story of Jesus!

—Roger D. Campbell