



QUESTIONS THAT PERPLEX

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PREFACE

Twenty years of “holding forth the world of life” (Phil. 2:16) has been the character of this great lectureship. Editors and lectureship directors of the past David B. Jones and Jason Hillburn, and the current, Wayne Rodgers have attempted their best to set forth a lectureship that would prove worthy of study to help each Bible student to grow.

Trey Bledsoe has been a tremendous help to each director in helping and guiding with the selection of topics, titles, speakers, and the promotion of this good lectureship.

This year’s theme, ***Questions That Perplex***, lends itself to a great study of topics concerning Christian Evidences and general questions concerning the Lord’s Church. The questions are those that are commonly heard among the Lord’s people. The Bible reveals to us God’s Will for mankind concerning salvation and Godly living. By this study, we soon realize that God has not left man to his own devices, but rather has given unto us “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3).

May this study be a blessing to all for the ages to come.

Wayne Rodgers

Editor

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Was the flood of Noah's day local or global?

Billy Bland

INTRODUCTION:

1. The flood of Noah's day was a catastrophic and remarkable event that happened only one time in the earth's existence. After this flood, God promised Noah that He would never destroy the world in the same way He did with the flood. "And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth" (Gen. 9:11).
2. Thousands of years later, Peter wrote about some scoffers who would come in the latter days, walking after their own lust and saying where is the promise of His coming?
 - A. He wrote, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the Word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: **Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:** But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. 3:3-7).
 - B. Peter explains that all things had not continued as they were from the foundation of the world.

- C. There was a great catastrophic event by which the world was overflowed with water and perished.
3. Why did God send the flood and was this flood confined to a local area of the world or did it in fact cover the whole earth?
4. The flood of Noah's day is described in Genesis 6-8.

A. God explained the reason for the flood:

- 1) "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:5-8).
- 2) Again, the Word of God stated, "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth" (Gen. 6:11-13).

B. God commanded Noah:

- 1) In the midst of this wicked world this was one family living righteously.
 - 2) “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen. 6:8).
 - 3) God said to Noah, “Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits” (Gen. 6:14-15).
 - 4) Noah obeyed - “Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he” (Gen. 6:22).
5. The Word of God shows that the flood of Noah’s day was global and not merely to the local Mesopotamia area (as some falsely affirm).

DISCUSSION:

I. EVIDENCE FOR THE GLOBAL FLOOD

A. God’s purpose for the flood is evidence of the global flood.

1. “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5).
2. “And God said unto Noah, The end of **all flesh** is come before Me; for the earth is filled with

- violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth” (Gen. 6:13).
3. “And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to **destroy all flesh**, wherein is the breath of life, **from under heaven**; and **every thing that is in the earth shall die**” (Gen. 6:17).
 4. “And **all flesh died** that moved **upon the earth**, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: **All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died**” (Gen. 7:21-22).
 5. God’s intent was to destroy **all flesh** that breathed air.
 6. It would be folly to believe that all animals, birds, creeping things, etc., were all confined to a small geographic area of the world in the days of Noah.
- B. The depth of the flood is evidence for the global flood.
1. “And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and **all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward** did the waters prevail; and **the mountains were covered**” (Gen. 7:19-20).
 2. Since liquids seek their own levels, the waters of the flood could not have remained local.

C. The breaking up of all the fountains of the great deep prove a global flood.

1. "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were **all the fountains of the great deep broken up**, and the windows of heaven were opened" (Gen. 7:11).
2. "broken up" - Cleave, burst open.
3. The world not only experience torrential rain from heaven, but also all the foundations of the great deep were broken up.
4. This would have caused global catastrophic destruction.
5. Imagine if you can the great tsunamis and destructions of such an event.

D. The ark itself is evidence of the global flood.

1. If the flood was just a local matter, Noah and his family simply could have moved to another location.
2. When God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (local areas), God told Lot and his family to flee the area.
3. The **size** of the ark is proof. "And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits" (Gen. 6:15). (Why so huge, if local?)

4. It was designed to ride a huge flood; therefore, it was shaped like a box.
5. The carrying capacity was such that it could carry 550 to 600 standard railroad boxcars.
6. Why build such an ark when they could have moved to another area?

E. Christ says the flood took them all away:

1. “For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and **took them all away**; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. 24:38–39).
2. “And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and **destroyed them all**” (Luke 17:26–27).
3. Not only should one note that all people outside the ark were destroyed, but the coming of Christ is going be like Noah’s day.
4. All people (globally) will be affected by Christ’s return.
5. “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He

sit upon the throne of His glory: And before Him shall be gathered **all nations**: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Matt. 25:31–32).

6. “Behold, He cometh with clouds; and **every eye shall see Him**, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen” (Rev. 1:7).

F. Peter’s inspired testimony: “And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the **world of the ungodly**” (2 Pet. 2:5).

G. The covenant of the rainbow is evidence of a global flood.

1. God promised there would never be another flood like the one in Noah’s day (Gen. 9:8-17).
2. However, there have been many local floods since that time.
3. Consequently, the flood of Noah’s day was not a local flood.

II. ARGUMENTS FOR A LOCAL FLOOD

A. Some say Psalm 104:6-9 refers to the creation.

1. “Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy

thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth” (Psa. 104:6-9).

2. The argument is, “if verse 9 refers to the creation, then there could not be a universal flood because the waters will not turn again to cover the earth.”
3. Answer:
 - a. Verses 6-9 do not refer to the creation week, but rather to the flood.
 - b. Other things found in Psalm 104 cannot refer to the creation week.
 - c. “The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God” (Psa. 104:21). This did not happen during the creation week.
 - d. “Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening” (Psa. 104:23).
 - e. “There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein” (Psa. 104:26). No ships were during the creation week.
 - f. “Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord”

(Psa. 104:35). There were no sinners in the week of creation.

g. The Psalmist is referring to the same event to which Isaiah refers - "For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: **for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth;** so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee" (Isa. 54:9).

B. It is said, "the whole earth" does not mean the whole earth.

1. This is an argument on the world "whole" being used a synecdoche (a part for the whole)
2. An example used is, "The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;" (Gen. 2:11).
3. Answer: The context must determine its usage.
4. "And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered" (Gen. 7:19).
5. "Whole heaven" in the context does not mean just Mesopotamia.

C. Earth refers to people.

1. "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Gen. 6:11). (It is argued that the "earth" refers to people)
2. Answer: Not really an argument. It is a figure of speech known as Metonymy. However, it should

be noted that the flood affected the land and the inhabitants.

D. "All" does not mean "all."

1. Answer: True that it does not always.
2. But sometimes it does mean all.
3. Again, the context is important.

E. All the people lived in the Mesopotamia area.

1. Answer: That is just an assumption.
2. Due to the long lives (over 900 years), there could be a billion people, plus billions of animals.
3. They would have scattered beyond the Mesopotamian valley.

III. LESSONS FROM THE GLOBAL FLOOD

A. Mankind has free will.

1. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Gen. 6:5-6).

B. Wickedness will not go unpunished.

1. "And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them" (Gen. 6:7). Cf. 2 Peter. 3:8-10, 2:5a.

C. God will save the righteous.

1. "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:8). "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;" (2 Pet. 2:5).

D. God is omnipotent. He is superior to and controls the creation.

E. God keeps His promises.

1. The bow. (cf. Gen. 9:14-15).
2. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

CONCLUSION:

1. The flood of Noah's day was global.
2. The same Word that brought the flood will one day destroy the heavens and the earth and bring the judgment.
3. "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. 3:6-7).

Did dinosaurs co-exist with humans?

Don Blackwell

INTRODUCTION:

1. The modern-day story of dinosaurs begins in the spring of 1822 with a medical doctor in Oxford England named Gideon Mantell (Reason & Revelation).

A. Doctor Mantell and his wife discovered a large tooth unlike any that they had ever seen.

B. Doctor Mantell was convinced that he had discovered a new kind of animal.

C. He named it "iguana-don" which means "iguana tooth."

D. About the same time, another individual discovered some bones of a huge, meat eating, reptile-like creature, which was given the name "Megalosaurus," which means "giant lizard."

2. By 1842 many of these type fossils had been found, and a British anatomist, Sir Richard Owen, was convinced that a whole tribe of huge lizard-like reptiles had existed in the past.

A. He named them "dinosaurs."

DISCUSSION:

I. DID DINOSAURS REALLY EXIST?

A. Early on, after the discovery of dinosaur fossils, a lot of people rejected the idea that they were real.

- B. Evolutionists have extensively used dinosaurs to promote evolution.
1. From kindergarten to graduate school, dinosaurs are used to indoctrinate people to the “fact” of organic evolution.
 2. A number of evolutionists have said that the study of dinosaurs was the deciding factor for them to give up their belief in God and to accept the belief in organic evolution.
- C. There is overwhelming evidence that says that dinosaurs did exist.
1. There are huge numbers of dinosaur fossils of all different kinds that have been found.
 2. Christians should not be afraid of evidence.
 3. Evolutionists speak about prehistoric man and the different phases that man supposedly went through to get to where he is today, but they have virtually no evidence. There are no fossils.
 - a. Such is not the case with dinosaurs.
- D. If dinosaurs really existed, then why are they not mentioned in the Bible?
1. First, the word “dinosaur” wasn’t even invented until 1842.
 2. Second, there are lots of animals that are not mentioned by name in the Bible.
 3. Third, there are dinosaur-like creatures described in the Bible.
- E. Job 40:15 speaks of a “behemoth” (KJV).

1. It is the only time this Hebrew word occurs in the Bible, and there has been a lot of controversy over how to translate it.
 - a. Strong's Greek and Hebrew Dictionary says, "perhaps an extinct dinosaur" (Strong).
 - b. Definition 1a) says, "a Diplo-o-cus or Brachiosaurus, exact meaning unknown."
 - c. It adds, "Some translate as elephant or hippopotamus but from the description in Job 40:15-24, this is patently absurd."
2. Some people try to make these verses describe an elephant or a hippo. Examine the verses and see if that sounds accurate.
 - a. Verse 17, "Moveth his tail like a cedar."
 - b. Does an elephant's tail resemble a cedar tree?
 - c. Verse 20 says that the mountains bring him food.
 - d. This could not be a hippo. It almost never leaves the river.

F. Job 41 speaks of the "leviathan."

1. Strong's Greek and Hebrew Dictionary gives the following definition:
 - a. Leviathan, sea monster, dragon.
 - b. 1a) Large aquatic animal.
 - c. 1b) Perhaps the extinct dinosaur, plesiosaurus, exact meaning unknown (Strong).

2. From the description in Job 41:1-34, this appears to be a large fire-breathing creature of some sort.
 - a. This particular Hebrew word appears at least seven times in the Bible translated as “dragon.”
 - b. Verses 18-21, “His sneezings flash forth light, And his eyes *are* like the eyelids of the morning.¹⁹ Out of his mouth go burning lights; Sparks of fire shoot out.²⁰ Smoke goes out of his nostrils, As *from* a boiling pot and burning rushes.²¹ His breath kindles coals, And a flame goes out of his mouth.”
3. There are many modern creatures that still exist that have similar defenses.

II. IF DINOSAURS DID EXIST, THE NEXT QUESTION IS WHEN AND WHERE?

- A. Evolutionists tell us that dinosaurs became extinct roughly 65-70 million years ago, while man (in one form or another) supposedly evolved only 2-3 years ago.
- B. This puts men and dinosaurs approximately 65 million years apart.
- C. A man cannot believe the Bible and believe this!
 1. Exodus 20:11, “For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and **all** that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

2. Man and dinosaurs were made during the same 6 days of creation.
3. Did man and dinosaurs live on the earth together? They had to!

III. WHERE DID THE DINOSAURS GO?

- A. This may be the most puzzling question of them all.
- B. Reginald Daly wrote a book in which he documented over 20 different explanations for what happened to the dinosaurs.
 1. And since the writing of his book, there have been a number of new ideas put forth.
- C. The idea most common is that some type of tremendous climate change took place, so drastic that dinosaurs could no longer live.
- D. Most creationists believe that the death of the dinosaurs is largely due to the flood of Noah's day.
- E. Genesis 1 appears to describe a water vapor canopy that surrounded the earth in the beginning.
 1. Genesis 1:6-7, "Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." ⁷ Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament; and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day."

2. If the water vapor canopy theory is correct, this would have caused several global geological effects, to include:
 - a. A tropical paradise on the earth due to a greenhouse warming effect.
 - b. There would have been tropical vegetation in the Arctic and Antarctic.
 - c. There would have been no hydrologic cycle, as constant temperatures would preclude rain.
 - d. This is consistent with what we read in Genesis 2:5-6.
 - e. This canopy would have protected living organisms from short wavelength ultraviolet radiation, resulting in many health benefits.

F. What happened to the water vapor canopy?

1. Genesis 7:11 says, “all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. ¹² And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.”

G. With the end of the canopy, the climate changed drastically and rapidly.

1. There were likely furious winds, earthquakes and massive erosion.
2. Many of the Dinosaurs would have died in the flood. Those who were on the ark would have left it to find a world incredibly different from the one before the flood.

- a. Food, once abundant, would now be difficult to find.
- b. Weather that had always been pleasant would be hostile.
- c. The lush green vegetation covering the entire earth would have more resembled the present-day (Blackwell).

CONCLUSION:

1. Christians do not need to be afraid of the evidence.
2. The fossil evidence shows that dinosaurs existed.
3. The fossil evidence shows that dinosaurs and man co-existed.

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HOW CAN EVOLUTION BE WRONG WHEN EVERYONE BELIEVES IT?

Daniel F. Cates

INTRODUCTION:

1. "Everyone else is doing it."
 - A. How many children have used this reasoning for going along with the crowd in something which was mischievous or even dangerous!
2. Sadly, some will accept evolution merely because "everyone else is doing it."
3. This series of four questions will help to demonstrate the fallacy of believing in evolution just because "everyone else is doing it."

DISCUSSION:

I. HAVE THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE *EVER* BEEN RIGHT?

A. Scriptural principle teaches that the majority are dangerous and lost.

1. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to *do* evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest *judgment*:" (Exo. 23:2).
2. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13,14).

3. "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19).
4. World of Noah's day (Gen. 6:1-5).
5. God's concern regarding Babel (Gen. 11:1-9).
6. "In those days *there was* no king in Israel: every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes" (Jud. 21:25).
7. "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Ecc. 7:29).
8. Romans 3:9-18 is the product of Romans 1:21-32!
9. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4); "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12:9).

B. Ironically, the secular recognition is also that the majority are wrong.

1. Regarding thinking out of the box in business/technology, Paul Rulkens delivered a Tedx lecture on "Why the Majority Is Always Wrong."
2. Regarding politics, Jim Hume, columnist for Vancouver, Canada's, Times Colonist wrote an

article called "Beware the Majority Opinion--It's Wrong All Too Often."

- a. He shared a quote by Mark Twain,
"Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect."
 - b. He also quoted Leo Tolstoy who wrote,
"Wrong does not cease to be wrong because the majority share in it."
3. A. Roy King in a WordPress.com article on "Why the Majority Is Usually Wrong" quoted philosopher Soren Kierkegaard who said, "Truth always rests with the minority, and the minority is always stronger than the majority, because the minority is generally formed by those who really have an opinion, while the strength of the majority is illusory, formed by the gangs who have no opinion ..."; King's conclusion was "... all of us should be wary of accepting ideas credulously and taking the easy path of following the crowd."
4. George Bernard Shaw said, "The minority is sometimes right; the majority always wrong."

II. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF TRUTH?

- A. Truth is not subjective--based on, indeed IS, the Word of God.

B. Not changing – Truth would necessarily vary age to age, nation to nation, and person to person if it were subjective.

1. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God" (Psa. 90:2).
2. "For I *am* the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3:6).
3. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jam. 1:17).
4. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8).

III. IS EVOLUTIONARY SCIENCE NECESSARILY RIGHT AND THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT OF CREATION NECESSARILY WRONG?

A. Anyone with even a small understanding of the fundamental doctrines of evolutionary theory and a dictionary can see that evolution does not fit the criteria required for something to be a "law," and really not even a "fact," "hypothesis," or "theory" though it is purported to be all three--the same applies to evolution's required "abiogenesis" or "spontaneous generation," and its cohort, the "big bang"; none of

these things truly fit the criteria of having been observed, being testable, or being repeatable.

- B. There are numerous philosophical (moral, esthetic, religious, ontological) and scientific (cosmological, teleological) arguments supporting the existence of God and, therefore--if God truly be the God of the Bible and the early part of Genesis is to be taken literally, the creation account; moreover, if one looks at the scientific evidence and takes into account the Noachic flood, he can see that millions of years are not necessarily for what is seen in the geological and biological world today, though evolution requires the vast time of uniformitarianism.

IV. DOES EVERYONE ELSE REALLY BELIEVE IN EVOLUTION?

A.No!

- B. In spite of the constant onslaught of evolutionary propaganda, the pressure to conform in academic environments, and being turned away by those who supposedly believe in God but who do not truly live like it, there is a great number of people who do not believe in evolution – even some scientists.

1. Fern Elsdon-Baker wrote an article for *The Guardian* on "Questioning Evolution Is Neither Science Denial Nor the Preserve of Creationists" in which she showed that even a small percentage of atheists felt that evolution was not sufficient to explain human consciousness.

2. In his article on “Here’s Why So Many Smart People Don’t Believe in Evolution,” Rafi Letzter wrote, “Only 50% [of US adults – DFC] believe in evolution,” referring to a Gallup poll which actually showed the number to be a small amount lower than that.
3. The reader is encouraged to find a copy of Henry M. Morris’ Men of Science, Men of God to see that scores of history’s great scientists believed in God – one might say, “Yes, but evolution had not been presented as an option when they were coming along”; however, Bert Thompson’s The History of Evolutionary Thought shows that evolution was not the brainchild of Darwin but had its origin in the times of the Greeks.
 - a. Assuredly, not all scientists agree with evolution in this age, either! (Crowther).

CONCLUSION:

1. Even if everyone else believed in evolution, it would not make it so and it could not make it safe--in fact, Paul spoke of being among the majority as a part of the Christian's past!
 - A. "And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom

also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:1-3).

B. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another" (Titus 3:3).

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Are members of the church of Christ the “only ones” going to Heaven?

Jeremy Thornton

INTRODUCTION:

1. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” (Rom. 1:16)
2. I am not ashamed of what God has promised and has planned since the “foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4), but, for some reason, many members of the church are ashamed to proclaim the truth found within the pages of God’s Word, which affirms that in order to go to heaven one MUST be a member of the body of Christ.
3. This question is a question that has caused debates, arguments, and strife among families, and friends, and has also caused the church to be the subject of many jokes.
4. This question is no laughing matter, but is a matter of eternal consequences, therefore it is a question that must be seriously studied in order to answer it correctly.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE ANSWER IS A MATTER OF AUTHORITY.

A. Since the question at hand is a matter of eternity, having Heaven or hell in the balance, we cannot rely upon our feelings for the answer, but only rely upon the only authority given to man for this type of answer.

1. When this question is answered by members of the church, some may ask what authority we have to condemn someone or to say that

members of the church are the only ones going to heaven, but the answer we give cannot be viewed as an opinion but only as a “thus saith the Lord” or “book, chapter, and verse” answer.

2. “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15).
3. “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (1 Pet. 4:11).
4. “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:3).

B. God has the authority to choose which **ones** will be in heaven.

1. God is the Creator of all that exists (Gen. 1:1).
2. God has given us everything that we have needed for life on this earth and eternal life when this life is over (2 Pet. 1:3)
3. No one could have stated better words in regard to God’s ultimate power and authority than David as is recorded in Psalm 19.

- a. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" (Psa. 19:1).
- b. "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun" (Psa. 19:4).
- c. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether" (Psa. 19:7-9).

C. God's Word is the written authority to teach us which **ones** will be in heaven.

1. The Bible is the inspired, breathed-out Word of God that is given to us to instruct us in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
2. It is the Word that will sanctify (John 17:17).
3. It is the Word that has been given to us for learning, comfort, and hope (Rom. 15:4).
4. It is the Word that will ultimately judge and decide which **ones** will or will not go to heaven (John 12:48).

D. Jesus was given authority to make a way for the **ones** going to heaven.

1. Jesus took upon the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of man, and was obedient unto death (Phil. 2:5-7), making salvation possible for mankind.
2. Jesus was given ALL authority in Heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:18).
3. Jesus is the author of eternal salvation and is now seated at the right hand of God (Heb. 12:2).
4. Jesus, having all authority, has promised that He has gone to make a way for us and will come again and receive us unto Himself (John 14:1-3), and having this authority He is the **only** way to the Father (John 14:6)

II. THE ANSWER IS A MATTER OF OBEDIENCE.

A. Since God has the authority to decide which **ones** will be in heaven, His commands **MUST** be obeyed.

1. Since He has “so loved the world” and gave His **only** Son to save us, we must obey the commands given to receive this love.
2. Vengeance will be taken upon those that do not obey the Gospel (2 Thes. 1:8).

B. The only **ones** that are going to Heaven are the **ones** that hear the Word of God.

1. Jesus commanded His apostles to go into all the world to preach the Gospel, because it is through

the hearing of the Gospel whereby mankind is saved (Mat. 28:19; Mar. 16:15; Luk. 24:46-47).

2. The apostle Paul spoke of those that had a “zeal for God but not according to knowledge,” and emphasized the importance of Gospel preaching as it is by the preaching of the Word whereby man obtains faith (Rom. 10:2; 10:17).
3. Just as Peter stated, the Gospel message of Jesus Christ is the “words of eternal life” (John 6:68).
4. Timothy was encouraged to “preach the Word” because there would be some that will not take heed to sound doctrine and the question at hand is proof that there are some that have turned their ears unto fables (2 Tim. 4:2ff.).

C. The only **ones** that are going to Heaven are the **ones** that believe Jesus is the Christ.

1. Belief in Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary in order to be in Heaven.
2. “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.” (John 8:24)
3. The truth is that Jesus is the Messiah and this truth will make one free from sin and death (John 8:32).

D. The only **ones** that are going to Heaven are the **ones** that repent of their sins.

1. God cannot have fellowship with sin (2 Cor. 6:14; Isa. 59:2).

2. In order to be in Heaven, one must turn away from sins.
3. God commands everyone, everywhere to repent on order to be in Heaven (Acts 17:30).

E. The only **ones** going to heaven are the **ones** that confess that Jesus is Christ.

1. Those who confess Jesus is the Christ on this earth will be confessed before God by Jesus (Mat. 10:32).
2. It was upon the confession that Jesus was the Christ, that the church was built (Mat. 16:16ff.)
3. It is with the mouth that confession is made unto eternal life (Rom. 10:9-10).
4. It was the statement that Jesus is the Christ that caused the chariot to be stopped and the eunuch was baptized (Acts 8:37-38).

F. The only **ones** going to heaven are the **ones** that are baptized for the remission of their sins.

1. Baptism for the remission of sins “saves” from one’s sins (1 Pet. 3:21).
2. It is baptism that washes away one’s sins (Acts 22:16).
3. Baptism is a necessity for salvation (Mar. 16:16).

G. The only **ones** going to heaven are the **ones** that keep the commands found in the Word of God.

1. Jesus urged the congregation at Smyrna at “be faithful unto death” in order to receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

2. Paul exhorted the Corinthians to be steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding (1 Cor. 15:58).
3. Jesus warns what will happen to those that do not obey His commands.
 - a. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mat. 7:21-23).
 - b. Only the ones doing the will of the Father will be saved.

III. THE ANSWER IS A MATTER OF OWNERSHIP.

A. When the Day of Judgement comes and everyone stands before the Judgment Seat of Christ, Jesus will divide the righteous from the unrighteous, and the **ones** that are His will be able to enter into Heaven, and the **ones** that are not His will be cast into eternal punishment.

1. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things

done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).

2. “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Mat. 25:31-34).
3. “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mat. 25:41).
4. “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29).

B. The only **ones** that are going to Heaven are the **ones** that have been added to the body of Christ.

1. Those that obey God’s plan of redemption are added to the body of Christ (Acts 2:47)
2. It is God that adds to the body, and not man.
 - a. No one is voted into the body of Christ.

- b. No one can join the body of Christ.
- c. Only God can place man in or out of the body.

C. The only **ones** that are going to Heaven are the **ones** that belong to Jesus Christ.

1. Jesus is the “Good Shepherd,” and those that have obeyed His commands belong to Him; He knows us and He has bought us.
 - a. “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:14-15).
 - b. “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

D. The only **ones** that are going to Heaven are the **ones** that are espoused to Jesus.

1. The church is the bride of Christ, and He is the Savior of her (Eph. 5:23ff.).
2. There are many that have been called to this great wedding, but only few have chosen to accept the invitation (Mat. 22:1-14).
3. The great wedding has taken place, and we must prepare ourselves and be ready for when the “bridegroom” returns (Mat. 25:1-13).

E. The only **ones** that are going to Heaven are the **ones** that are covered in His blood.

1. The blood of Christ was shed in order that we have remission of sins (Mat. 26:28).
2. It was necessary that the blood of the Perfect Sacrifice be shed, because it was not possible that the blood of any other could take away sins, and without the shedding of blood there can be no remission (Heb. 9:22; 10:4).
3. Since Jesus went to the cross, we have a continual cleansing by His blood if we continue to be faithful to Him (1 John 1:7).

F. The only **ones** that are going to Heaven are the **ones** that spoken for by the Advocate.

1. Jesus, having all authority given to Him and having the power to remove sin by the shedding of His blood, will save those that have obeyed His commands, and will uphold our case before the Father on the Judgment Day, being our Advocate (1 John 2:1)
2. What great assurance it is to know that the One pleading our case is the Shepherd who knows His sheep!
3. Jesus is our *parakletos* (Advocate) that has been sent to assist the ones that will obey His commands.

CONCLUSION:

1. Eternity hangs in the balance of this great question.
2. According to what we read in God's Word, the "only ones" going to heaven are those that acknowledge the authority of the Godhead, obey the commands given, and belong to Jesus Christ.

Do miracles exist, today?

Gary Colley

INTRODUCTION:

1. The brief answer to our question is “yes” and “no”.
 - A. We do not have Biblical miracles being worked today.
 - B. We do have the miracles of Jesus and the apostles which are recorded in the New Testament:
 1. He walked on the water (Even those who claim they can work miracles now should not try this today!).
 2. Jesus healed the sick, caused the blind to see, made the lame to walk, fed the 5,000 and the 4,000, calmed the raging storms, and even raised the dead!
 3. There are none of these things which any human is able to perform today.

DISCUSSION:

I. THESE GIVE ASSURANCE BOTH THEN AND NOW, THAT JESUS WAS THE SON OF GOD:

- A. The apostles, under the Great Commission, were charged with preaching the Gospel to all nations (Mat. 28:18-20).
 1. They must do this in languages previously they had not spoken (Cf. Acts 2:4-8).
 2. They worked miracles as also recorded in the Bible (Mar. 16:17-20).

- B. Remember also that the historian Luke records the happenings on the notable Day of Pentecost, when the church was setup, built, and established.
1. First, concerning the worship on the “Lord’s Day” (Acts 20:7).
 - a. Concerning their Lord’s Day worship, Luke said, “they (the early Christians, G.C.) continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).
 - b. Please note that “fellowship” includes the singing (Eph. 5:19), and giving (I Cor.16:1-2) of these Christians.
 2. Secondly, who performed miracles on that day.
 - a. But concerning the miracles done that day he said, “And fear came upon every soul: and **many wonders and signs were done by the apostles**” (Acts 2:43).
- C. Again, these miracles were to give assurance, both then and now, that Jesus was the Son of God and also that the words of the apostles are from, and in harmony with Heaven’s authority (John 20:30-31).
- D. The inspired Hebrew writer has given the same description of the purpose and use of these miracles! His conclusion:
1. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word

spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will (Heb. 2:1-4).

II. MODERN CLAIMS

A. It is not an unusual occurrence today to see and hear even a woman preaching on television and claiming that she can work miracles.

1. She even promises her audience that they can expect the Lord to work a miracle in their lives.
2. She asserts that the Lord would miraculously provide for their financial needs, if only they would trust Him to work a miracle.
3. As proof that the Lord would work a miracle, she quotes Hebrews 13:8, but will never quote Heb 13:9! Verse 8 says, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever; But, Heb 13:9 gives the meaning, "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein."

4. These verses prove, as a source of great encouragement, that the Lord's teaching, commands, and promises have not changed and will not change! (Cf. Heb. 9:6; John 14:1-6).
5. Her reasoning that Jesus worked miracles during His earthly ministry and therefore still works miracles today is false and should not be accepted by anyone today.

B. However, it is a gross mistake and misuse of Hebrews 13:8 to say that it means miracles are still worked today.

1. Does this inspired Bible passage teach, and give ground for the claim, of promising that Jesus will miraculously provide for us financially?
2. There is no implication here that Jesus will miraculously meet our financial needs!
3. The so-called "health and wealth" gospel being taught by some today is a false gospel (Gal.1:8-9).

III. THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE LORD CREATED A MAN FROM THE DUST OF THE GROUND AND A WOMAN FROM MAN'S RIB: (Gen. 2:7; 3:18-25).

A. But, He no longer forms man or woman in that way.

1. Individuals now come into the world by natural birth.

B. The Lord indeed performed miracles in the past, but this does not mean that He does today.

2. Paul by inspiration informs us that the miraculous age passed away when the fullness of inspiration was completed (I Cor.13:8-10).
3. The writer James tells us that we now have “that which is perfect” in the “perfect law of liberty” (Jas.1:25).
4. Paul also declares that revelation has ceased because the New Testament is now complete (I Cor.2:9-13).
5. We are now to “contend earnestly for the faith” or the Gospel! (Jude 3).
6. We are to “stand fast in the faith” (I Cor.16:13-14).
7. And, if any preach any other doctrine or teaching other than found in the Word of God, we are to “let him be accursed” (Gal.1:8-9).
8. We are taught to warn against going beyond that which is written (II Jn.9-11; I Cor.4:6).
9. We should be convinced, if for no other reason, that these things are required for the faithful Christian, by seeing our Lord in the garden of betrayal restore the ear of Malchus the high priest servant (Jn.18:10-12).

C. Jesus relation to the Father in Heaven and the Word He spoke to lost and dying souls, was confirmed by this and many other miracles (Jn.20:30-31).

D. Once the Word has been confirmed no more conformation is needed! (Heb. 1:1-3; 2:1-4).

CONCLUSION:

1. These thoughts are not to suggest that the Lord does not work in the lives of His people today (2 Tim. 2:19).
2. We are thankful that He does work in our lives on a daily basis (Mat. 6:9-11).
3. He does work, but in His own time and manner by His providence.
 - A. He promises to provide for us and never leave us nor forsake us (Mat. 6:33; Heb. 3:5-6).
 - B. However, His providence is working in a non-miraculous manner!
 - C. How do we know?
 - D. We are assured that miracles are no longer performed as they were in the first century (I Cor. 13:8-10).
 - E. We now have the “perfect law of liberty” and can refer to specific places in the Scriptures for our proof of the Lord’s Will today (Jms. 1:25).
 - F. We do not have miracles today to confirm the Word!
 - G. We can trust in the fact that God does not change, and neither does Christ change in His teaching, judgements, and promises (Jms. 1:17; Heb. 13:8-9).
 - H. We urge all to obey the Gospel, allow faith in His word to sustain you, and to enjoy the blessed hope of Heaven to the close of your days on earth (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:1, 6; 2 Cor. 4:16-5:1).

WHY DOES THE CHURCH OF CHRIST OPPOSE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP?

Jameson Steward

INTRODUCTION:

1. All that many people in the United States know about the Lord's church is that the church of Christ does not worship with mechanical instruments.
2. The death of Christ brought forth a New Covenant, under which we live today (Heb. 9:15-28).
 - A. This is an important point to consider in this matter because instrumental music was commanded by God under the Old Testament (2 Chr. 29:25; Psa. 150 KJV).
 - B. However, we live under the New Testament, as we will observe later, so is there Biblical authority for instrumental music in worship as commanded by God in the New Testament?
3. "The apology chiefly used for introducing the instrument was the rapidly changing world. The frontier had pushed on westward; larger cities were growing up in the mid-west. Science was making new discoveries. The train was increasing its speed and efficiency, tying the country closer together. New standards were arising, and consequently, society was raising its requirements. Some felt that a worship without an instrument was all right in a society that was accustomed only to the backwoods, but new standards of respectability were now set up, and the church to be progressive must meet these standards" (West 83).
4. In considering the question, "Why does the church of Christ oppose instrumental music in worship," we will consider

several other questions that should help us to answer our main question for this study.

DISCUSSION:

I. IS GOD WORTHY OF WORSHIP?

- A. The LORD is worthy to be praised (2 Sam. 22:4; Psa. 18:3).
- B. Jesus Christ is worthy of more glory than Moses (Heb. 3:13).
- C. The Lord is worthy to receive glory, and honor, and power (Rev. 4:11).
- D. The Lamb that was slain, Jesus Christ, is worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing (Rev. 5:12).
- E. Man is not worthy of worship (Acts 10:25-26).
- F. The angels are not worthy of worship; only God is worthy of worship (Rev. 22:8-9).

II. DOES GOD HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO COMMAND HOW HE IS TO BE WORSHIPPED?

- A. "Unless we know how God (or the Bible) authorizes, we cannot be sure about anything we do or say in the realm of religion" (Deaver 2).
- B. "Human beings do not establish Bible authority. It is God Himself who establishes the authority. It is our responsibility to discover that authority (in connection with required attitudes and conduct), to respect it, and to be governed by it" (Deaver preface).

1. Biblical authority is established by Example.
2. Biblical authority is established by Implication.
3. Biblical authority is established by Direct Statement.
 - a. Interestingly, we find that musical instruments were commanded by God as a part of worship to Him under the Old Testament (2 Chr. 29:25).
 - b. If God wanted musical instruments in worship under the New Testament, then where is the command or authority for it?
4. We find an example of a man who had a proper understanding of authority within the pages of Scripture (Luke 7:6-8).
 - a. "Individuals interested in obeying God's plan must not change His decrees. When God's Word provides direction in a matter, the matter is settled. Those who wish to please God must follow the examples of Paul and Apollos and refrain from 'think[ing] beyond what is written' (1 Cor. 4:6)" (Ramsey 218).
 - b. Jesus marveled at the faith of the centurion, in part, because this man understood the authority of Jesus Christ, perhaps better than anyone else during the life of Jesus.

5. Are musical instruments in worship a matter of expediency/opinion?
- a. H.T. Anderson's argued that "there was no law *against* the use of instrumental music; therefore, it is permitted by expediency" (West 90).
 - b. Robert Richardson set forth the opposite position, "The use of musical instruments in church worship can never be a question of expediency, for the simple reason that there is no law prescribing or authorizing it" (West 91).
 - c. Moses E. Lard agreed with Richardson, "When we plead expediency to justify practices unknown to the apostolic age, we are not within the limits of the expedient. We are then violating the word of God. Expediency is no law for innovations, either in faith or practice; and he who pleads it to this extent has abandoned the only rule which can save us from ruin" (West 89).
 - d. "The one view of expediency was that whatever the word of God did not specially disallow was permissible. Since the word of God did not condemn instrumental music, it was allowable. But, Richardson pointed out that nothing is expedient which is not first of

all lawful. It is a command of God to pray, but it is left to expediency to decide the place, time, and circumstances” (West 91).

C. We are under the authority of Jesus Christ and His teaching (Mat. 28:18; John 12:48).

1. God the Father has placed Jesus in this exalted position (Eph. 1:22-23).
2. The authority of Jesus is extended through the teaching of His apostles and all other inspired writers of the New Testament (Mat. 28:20; 16:19; Acts 15:24).
3. Therefore, the commands in the New Testament, are the commands of Jesus Christ, and He, being our Lord, has the right to give us commands to be obeyed (Luke 6:46; John 14:15).

D. The New Testament sets forth God’s pattern.

1. God gave Noah the pattern for building the ark (Gen. 6).
2. God gave Moses the pattern for building the tabernacle (Exo. 25; Heb. 8:5).
3. “God has given mankind the pattern for Christian character (attitudes and conduct) and the pattern for the church (organization, name, doctrine, worship, plan of salvation, mission)” (Deaver 16).
4. The New Testament is the pattern which mankind is to follow today (2 John 9; 1 Cor. 4:6; Gal. 1:6-8; Rev. 22:18-19).

5. "It is because of God's love for us that he has given the New Testament and our love for him will compel us to be obedient to that New Testament (John 14:15; 15:14; 1 John 5:3)" (Deaver 18).

III. DOES GOD SPECIFY THE PURPOSE WITH WHICH HE IS TO BE WORSHIPPED AS IT RELATES TO SINGING?

- A. Singing is to praise Him (Acts 16:25).
- B. Singing is to glorify Him (Rom. 15:9).
- C. Singing is to declare His name (Heb. 2:12).
- D. Singing is an expression of our joy to God (James 5:13).

IV. DOES GOD SPECIFY THE ACTIONS WITH WHICH HE IS TO BE WORSHIPPED AS IT RELATES TO SINGING?

- A. It is to be done with understanding (1 Cor. 14:15).
 1. This involves our mind or our intellect.
 2. We are to be able to understand what it is we are singing.
- B. It is to be done with speaking (Eph. 5:19).
 1. This means "to make vocal utterance" (Mounce).
 2. Singing is to be done so that others can hear.
- C. It is to be done by making melody in the heart (Eph. 5:19).
 1. Many Greek dictionaries state that the original Greek word (*psal'-lo*) includes the meaning, "to play on a stringed instrument."

2. Even if this is true, how would one make melody with a musical instrument “in your heart to the Lord?”
3. The melody is to be made in the heart. Therefore, the heart is the instrument to be played.

D. It is to be done with teaching (Col. 3:16).

1. Singing is to teach or instruct those who are involved.
2. It is interesting to note that our singing is a way we let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly.
 - a. This shows the importance of our songs being saturated with Scripture.
 - b. This shows the importance of our songs teaching that which is true to God’s Word.
 - c. How would a musical instrument let the Word of Christ dwell in me richly when it distracts from the words of the song?

E. It is to be done with admonishing (Col. 3:16).

1. Admonishing involves giving a warning.
2. Some of the songs we sing are meant to warn us to continue living as we should so that we will be ready when the Lord returns.

F. “No performance of an instrument can possibly grow out of the word of God in the heart; a mechanical instrument cannot speak that word either to praise God or to teach and admonish one another. The sound of the instrument drowns the words sung and hinders the teaching and admonition. The use of the instrument

hinders and destroys the essential purpose of the worship in song. It works an entire change in the song service; it sooner or later changes it from a service of praise to God into a musical and artistic entertainment that pleases and cultivates the fleshly and sensual nature" (Lipscomb 108-109).

V. IS GOD CONCERNED WITH HOW HE IS WORSHIPPED?

A. The Corinthian brethren were eating the Lord's Supper in a way and with an attitude which was displeasing to God (1 Cor. 11:17-34).

1. If it is possible to eat the Lord's Supper in a way which is displeasing to God, is it possible to worship God in song in a way which is displeasing to Him?
2. If it is possible to eat the Lord's Supper with an attitude which is displeasing to God, is it possible to worship God in song with an attitude which is displeasing to Him?

B. The brethren in the region of Galatia were allowing themselves to be swayed by the preaching of a different Gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).

1. God was not pleased with those who were leading these brethren astray and with those who were following after the false teachers.
2. We also must exercise caution in following after anyone or anything that is different than the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. Since God was not pleased with the preaching and acceptance of a different Gospel, is it

possible that God would not be pleased with the addition of the musical instrument into our singing?

C. The original readers of Hebrews were being tempted to forsake worshipping under the better way, Jesus Christ and His law, to go back to worshipping under the law of Moses (Heb. 10:23-31).

1. The writer of Hebrews warned them of the danger of leaving Christ.
2. We also must heed the warning of straying from the law of Jesus Christ.
3. Since it is dangerous to forsake the law of Christ to return to the law of Moses (or any other law), would it be dangerous to stray from what God has told us to do in our worshipping Him in song?

CONCLUSION:

1. Why does the church of Christ oppose instrumental music in worship?
 - A. God is worthy of our worship, and He has the authority to tell us how He is to be worshipped.
 - B. God has told us the purpose and the actions of our worshipping Him in song.
 - C. God is clearly concerned that His commands be followed, and that includes how we worship Him.
 - D. The New Testament teaches that His church is to worship Him with singing and making melody in our hearts.

- E. Therefore, since God has told us what He does want, it eliminates everything else, including worshipping Him with musical instruments.
2. The words of the Gospel preacher, Ben Franklin, still ring true today, “We can remain on safe ground, the common ground and the ground on which we have stood in peace and war – on what is *written*. The worship in all its parts – all its elements – is a matter of *revelation – divinely prescribed*. Nothing is acceptable worship, only that which the Lord ordained” (West 86).
 3. Friends, may we too learn “not to think beyond what is written” (1 Cor. 4:6).

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HOW COULD A LOVING GOD CONDEMN SOMEONE TO AN ETERNAL HELL?

B. J. Clarke

INTRODUCTION:

1. The atheist uses the question in the above title as a weapon, in an attempt to destroy faith in God.
2. The sincere follower of Christ may wonder about this question too. How can we answer this question accurately, without compromise, but with compassion?
3. Jesus would sometimes answer a question with a question. Likewise, the question above brings to mind some other crucial questions.

DISCUSSION:

I. IS HELL REALLY REAL?

- A. The subject of hell makes us so uncomfortable that we often avoid discussing the subject.
- B. The subject is avoided even in many of our classrooms and pulpits.
- C. Yet, the Bible is replete with references to the existence of a place called hell.
 1. John the Baptizer, the forerunner of Jesus, predicted that Jesus would baptize some of his hearers "with fire...and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Mat. 3:11-12).
 2. Jesus spoke more about hell than He did the subject of heaven. In fact, Jesus often employed

the image of fire to describe the punishment of the wicked in the afterlife.

- a. He taught that “whosoever shall say, Thou fool, **shall be in danger of hell fire**” (Mat. 5:22, emp. mine throughout, BJC).
 - b. He told His 12 disciples, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather **fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell**” (Mat. 10:28).
 - c. He labeled the Pharisees as “serpents” and a “generation of vipers” and asked them, “**how can ye escape the damnation of hell?**” (Mat. 23:33).
 - d. On the Day of Judgment, Jesus will “say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, **into everlasting fire**, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mat. 25:41).
3. The epistles also affirm the existence of hell. We cannot deny it.
- a. Speaking of the Day of Judgment, Paul described it for the wicked as being a time when “sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” (1 Thess. 5:3).
 - b. In his second epistle to the Thessalonians he affirmed that a time is coming “when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, **in flaming fire**

taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

- c. Jude believed in hell. The following two verses are packed with meaning:
 - 1) And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in **everlasting chains under darkness** unto the judgment of the great day. *Even* as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are **set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire** (Jude 6-7).
 - 2) Jude also reminded his readers that when we seek to save the lost we are “pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (Jude 23).
- 4. The Book of Revelation affirms that hell is really real.
 - a. John describes how “the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. **These**

both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev. 19:20).

- b. In his inspired description of the Great White Throne Judgment scene, he affirmed the reality of hell: **“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15).**
- c. In the very next chapter he informed his readers that **“the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).**

II. IS HELL REALLY ETERNAL?

A. The concept of **eternal** punishment seems to elicit the biggest objection to hell.

1. Many have argued that sinners will go to hell, but that they will be annihilated, i.e., completely burned up and extinguished from existence.
2. Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that the wicked absolutely cease to exist at death. They equate hell with the grave.
3. An increasing number of denominational theologians argue for something they call **“conditional immortality.”** This view affirms that

the wicked will be raised to suffer a punishment that is equivalent to their wickedness. After they have received adequate punishment for their sins, they will be annihilated.

B. Even in our own brotherhood, there are those who deny that hell is eternal.

1. Edward Fudge, who served for several years as an elder in the Bering Drive Church of Christ in Houston, Texas, wrote a book entitled "The Fire That Consumes," wherein he endeavored to affirm that the judgment of God against sinners will be eternal extinction rather than unending conscious torment."
2. F. LaGard Smith and John Clayton have publicly endorsed the views of Edward Fudge.

C. Despite the denials to the contrary, the Bible still teaches that hell is eternal.

1. On the Day of Judgment, when Christ sits on His judgment throne, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into **everlasting fire**, prepared for the devil and his angels... And these shall go away into **everlasting punishment**: but the righteous into **life eternal**" (Mat. 25:41, 46).
2. The plain teaching of Scripture is that the punishment of hell lasts just as long as the pleasure of "eternal life" enjoyed by those who go to heaven. In fact, the same Greek word is used to describe the duration of both heaven and hell!

III. IS GOD REALLY LOVING?

A. Over and over again, the same Bible, which affirms the existence of an eternal hell, also affirms the love of God.

1. Jesus affirmed the love of God in John 3:16.
2. Paul affirmed the love of God in Romans 5:6-8.
3. John affirmed the love of God in 1 John 4:8-19.

B. Some ask, "If God is so loving, why doesn't He just forgive everyone and let everyone go to heaven?" Such a question indicates a failure to appreciate the other attributes of God.

C. God is also holy.

1. "For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and **ye shall be holy; for I am holy**: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth (Leviticus 11:44; cf. 19:2; 20:7).
2. Peter spotlighted this same attribute of God: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, **Be ye holy; for I am holy**" (1 Peter 1:15-16).

D. Because God is holy, He must punish that which is unholy. This is not contrary to His love, but is actually an expression of it!

1. For instance, if God really loves children, should He not protect them by promising to punish anyone who would molest them?

2. Would it be loving for God to ignore the molestation of a child? Should there not be a punishment for those who would harm children?
3. Should terrorists be able to blow up buildings and kill thousands without any consequences attached to such behavior?

E. Some mistakenly conclude that God is too loving to punish them in hell.

1. They have forgotten Romans 11:22, wherein Paul beckoned his readers to “**behold the goodness and severity of God.**”
2. They have forgotten God’s holiness! God is love (1 John 4:8), but He is also holy and therefore must punish sin (1 Pet. 1:15-16; 2 Pet. 3:9-12).

F. Some have obviously forgotten that God loves us so much that He was willing to allow His only begotten Son to take upon Himself the pain and punishment that we deserve (John 3:16; Rev. 1:5).

G. Think of the pain that Jesus was willing to endure so that we would not have to experience the endless pain of hell! Isaiah 53!

H. It would be unloving and unholy for God to allow the wicked to sully the beauty and purity of heaven by their wicked ways.

1. In His love, He has appointed a place for the righteous to live without the taint of wickedness. “So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and **sever the wicked from among the just**” (Mat. 13:49).

2. Speaking of heaven, John wrote, “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev. 21:27).

IV. DOES GOD REALLY DO THE SENDING?

- A. According to Jesus, hell was prepared as a place for the devil and his angels (Mat. 25:41). It was never God’s desire to send anyone else to live there (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).
- B. It is true that hell has also been appointed as the eternal dwelling place for the lost.
 1. However, this does not mean that God has appointed people to go there against their will.
 2. It is to say that God has appointed a place of punishment for those who choose to live in sin, and that appointed place is hell.
- C. Yet, the good news of the Gospel is that hell is an avoidable place! We do not have to die lost and go to hell.
 1. The sacrificial and atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross has made hell an avoidable place (Eph. 1:7; 2:11-18; Col. 1:14-23)!
 2. Jesus experienced the pain of the cross so that we would not have to experience the pain of an eternal hell!

3. Of course, He provided a way of escape from hell but we have to be will to avoid the behaviors that would lead us to hell.

D. A number of texts contain implications that hell is an avoidable place.

1. For instance, Jesus once said, “But **I will forewarn you** whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him” (Luke 12:5). The implication is clear – if we fear Him (respect Him with reverential obedience and awe) we will not be “cast into hell.”
2. Likewise, Jesus taught in very memorable imagery that it would be better to cut your hand or foot off, and cast them from you, and enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire” (Mat. 18:8).
 - a. It would be better to pluck out an offending eye and cast it from us and enter into life with one eye than it would to have two eyes cast into hell fire” (Mat. 18:9).
 - b. Of course, Jesus is not speaking of the need literally to hack off, or pluck out, the members of our bodies that are involved in sinful behavior.
 - c. Rather, he is teaching that if we will control the impulses of the flesh by denying self, we will be able to avoid going to hell (Cf. Mark 9:43-47).

3. The account of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) is proof that hell is an avoidable place, for Lazarus avoided going there.
 - a. Even though the Greek word “hades” is used here, those who go to the torment compartment of Hades will certainly end up in “gehenna.”
 - b. The rich man could have gone to Abraham’s bosom also if he had made different choices upon the earth. He was not destined to go to torment – his choices landed him there.
 - c. Likewise, Lazarus was not guaranteed a ticket to the comfort of Abraham’s bosom – his choices on earth determined his eternal destiny!
4. The apostle Paul instructed the Colossians, “**Mortify** therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience” (Col. 3:5-6).
 - a. The very first word of his admonition is proof positive that hell is an avoidable place. We do not have to experience the wrath of God upon us for our disobedience.
 - b. If we mortify (put to death) fleshly lusts then we can avoid the wrath of God, assuming of course that we have been saved by His blood via our obedience to the gospel.

5. God will never send us to hell against our will, if we have chosen to live by His will! If we choose to live according to our own selfish will, then we will be sending ourselves to torment.
6. Notice where the blame lies in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 – those who obey not the gospel are those who will experience flaming fire and everlasting destruction!

CONCLUSION:

1. The very worst thing about hell is that God is not there! Those who are lost will be “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Thess. 1:9).
2. The best thing about heaven is the opportunity to live in the presence of an Awesome God!
3. We know that the Judge of all the earth will do right (Gen. 18:25). He will judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31).
4. If going to heaven and hell were based solely on what is fair, then in view of God’s holiness, and our ungodliness, all of us who are sinners should be lost and go to hell, and no one should get to go to heaven!
5. The real question is not, “How can a loving God send someone to an eternal hell?” The real question is, “How can a holy God allow sinful men to have a chance for forgiveness and go to heaven?” The loving answer is displayed on the cross of Christ!

CAN WE BE SAVED LIKE THE THIEF ON THE CROSS?

Barry Kennedy

INTRODUCTION:

1. Almost every evangelist who has tried reasoning with someone about salvation from the Scriptures has been faced with a question concerning the thief on the cross.
2. This subject often comes up when one brings up the doctrine of baptism being a necessary step toward the obtaining salvation.
3. Many have been taught, or just cannot see, how baptism is essential if Jesus could just tell a man hanging on a cross "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).
4. The purpose of this study is to answer the question, "Can we be saved like the thief on the cross?"
5. First of all, we must define our terms.
 - A. When we say "we," it is a reference to all of those needing salvation post Jesus' resurrection.
 - B. When we say saved, we mean liberation from the condemnation brought on by sin.
 - C. When we say thief, we reference the one malefactor hanging beside Jesus who was told he would be in paradise.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **CAN WE BE SAVED LIKE THE THIEF ON THE CROSS? *Of course!***

A. Though the world may be filled with prejudice, the reality remains, we are all equal in the sight of the Lord.

1. All accountable souls will find themselves in need of a savior (Rom. 3:23; 6:23).
2. The thief/ malefactor was forced to realize his need for a savior under extreme circumstances.
3. Sadly, many people today allow themselves to be in dire straits before they will see their need for the Lord (Luke 16:22-27).

B. The thief had been caught and condemned publicly, but that did not mean his situation was hopeless (Luke 23:39-42).

1. Clearly, he was not going to escape the consequences of his conviction (i.e. death), but he was able to find salvation for his soul (Mat. 16:26).
2. We too may find ourselves “caught” and think our situation is hopeless.
3. The thief shows us where to turn in order to find hope (Luke 23:43; cf. John 14:6).

C. How can **we** be saved like the thief on the cross?

1. We, like the thief, must realize our sin has brought our condemnation (Luke 23:41; Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10).
2. We, like the thief, must realize our need to be with the Lord (Luke 23:42; John 6:68).
3. We, like the thief, and any other soul for that matter, must be saved by Jesus or we are never

going to be saved (Luke 19:10; Mat. 1:21; Acts 4:12).

D. Therefore, in this way, of course we can be saved like the thief on the cross.

II. CAN WE BE SAVED LIKE THE THIEF ON THE CROSS? *Of course Not!*

A. Salvation is always time sensitive.

1. Salvation is time sensitive because one must not wait until it is too late (2 Cor. 6:2; Mat. 24:36-39; 2 Pet. 3:10).
2. The thief was about to draw his last breath; therefore, he immediately sought to cling to the true lifeline Who was hanging beside him.
3. Of course, this is in reference to ones need for salvation.

B. Salvation is time sensitive as it pertains to the requirements for salvation.

1. One of the most neglected aspects of Bible understanding has to be that of authority and specifically speaking dispensational authority.
 - a. In the beginning, God set up the “patriarchal law” in which He spoke directly to the heads of the house (Gen. 12:1ff; Job; etc.).
 - b. Next, God set up what has become known as the “Law of Moses” (Ex. 20).
 - c. Finally, Jesus brought into fruition the Law of Christ (Col. 2:14ff; John 1:17; Heb. 7:12).

- d. Each had specific requirements to which God expected man to conform.
 2. In the Patriarchal Age, Noah needed salvation from the great deluge and was told to build an ark (Gen 6-8).
 3. In the Mosaic Age, Israel needed salvation and was told to offer sacrifices through the Aaronic priesthood (Ex. 29).
 4. In the Christian Age (from Pentecost Acts 2 to the present), we are told to repent and be baptized for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38), based upon our faith and willingness to confess Christ Jesus (Acts 8:37).
- C. We cannot be saved like the thief on the cross for the same reason that we cannot be saved like Noah, Abraham, Moses, or any other great person of faith about whom we read prior to the establishment of the New Covenant (Heb. 8:7-13; Gal. 5:4).
1. Jesus was born, lived, and died under the Law of Moses (Gal. 4:4; Col 2:14).
 2. Of course, Jesus made it known that “the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins” (Mat. 9:6).
 3. Jesus, while drawing His last few breaths of the air that He created, shows us how He lovingly desires to have all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

4. Jesus, however, is no longer physically walking this earth nor hanging upon that old rugged cross.

D. Jesus, in His earthly ministry, made it clear that salvation (i.e. entrance into the Kingdom of God) in the requires obedience to the will of God (Mat. 7:21).

III. CAN WE BE SAVED LIKE THE THIEF ON THE CROSS? *Of course, we really do not want to!*

A. This point is not mean to be insulting nor juvenile, but one really must think honestly about this very important subject.

1. Jesus want us to come to the knowledge of the truth because the truth is what makes man free (John 8:32).
2. When the subject of salvation comes up, especially involving water baptism, it is not hard to find someone who is willing to call attention to the thief.
3. The question is, "Do they really want to be saved like the thief?"

B. If we are honest, no one would want to be saved like the thief.

1. To be saved like the thief would require being nailed to a cross.
2. To be saved like the thief would require Jesus being nailed to the cross again (Heb. 9:28).

3. To be saved like the thief would require reinstating the law of Moses, and make the Law of Christ invalid (Heb. 10:1; Gal. 6:2).

C. Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).

1. We, like the thief, need Jesus in order to be saved (John 14:6).
2. We, unlike the thief, have the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25).
3. We must take all of God's Word into consideration and make the appropriate application (Psalm 119:160; 2 Tim. 2:15)

CONCLUSION:

1. Can we be saved like the thief on the cross?
2. Absolutely because we all must be saved by Jesus.
3. Absolutely not because Jesus has given us a different plan.
 - A. His plan for us involves hearing His Word because that is what produces faith (Rom. 10:17).
 - B. He also expects us to repent of all our past sins (Acts 17:30).
 - C. We must also be baptized because that is what Jesus said must be done (Mark 16:15-16).
4. The account of thief hanging beside Jesus encourages us to own our mistakes and turn them over to the Lord before it is too late.

5. The account of the thief, however, does not set forth an example for how we are to receive salvation today.

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(All Scripture quotations are from this version unless otherwise specified).

IS THE BIBLE FROM GOD?

Justin Paschall

INTRODUCTION:

1. The question, “Is the Bible Inspired of God?” is of paramount importance!
 - A. “If the writings of the Bible are not inspired of God, they are the mere productions of men, and as such would merit no religious respect; in fact, in view of their exalted claims, they would warrant only contempt (Jackson 111).
 - B. On the other hand, if the Bible is inspired by our Creator, then It should and must be our guide for how we live and conduct ourselves.
 - C. There is no middle ground between these two options – The Bible is inspired or It is not.
2. Those who profess a belief in the inspire Word of God need to be able to prove that it is from God!
3. So what are the evidences for such a claim? The author wants to suggest six proofs.
 - A. The Bible claims inspiration.
 - 1) “Over 2,700 times the Bible says something to the effect of ‘the Lord said’ or this is ‘the Word of the Lord.’ That is truly amazing, considering that many Bibles have only 1,200 pages. On average, the Bible claims that it is God’s Word a little over two times per page” (Butt 39).
 - 2) And while claiming inspiration does not prove such, it is a necessary step in the process.

3) If the Bible did not claim to be inspired, the question would be answered right there.

B. The Bible has survived attempts to eradicate it.

1) No other book has been subjected to the great number of attempts to destroy it, and yet the Bible is still here.

2) “A thousand times over, the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone, and committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put” (Ramm 230).

C. The Bible contains amazing unity.

1) The Bible was written over a period of 1,600 years by approximately 40 different writers.

2) These writers came from different backgrounds and educational levels. Some were fisherman, some farmers, others scribes, and some kings.

3) “Yet when we look at this book – written by such a diversity of men over so many years – it exhibits amazing unity, as if a single guiding hand was behind it” (Butt 39).

D. The Bible is factually accurate.

1) If the Bible is the inspired Word of God, then one could reasonably expect it to be factually accurate in the things it discusses.

2) Many have tried to disprove the inspiration of the Bible by looking for historical and geographical inaccuracies within Holy Writ, yet time and time

again, the Bible is proven right and the skeptics are proven wrong.

E. The Bible contains foreknowledge.

- 1) One of the most interesting proofs for inspiration (in this author's opinion) is the medical and scientific foreknowledge of the Bible.
- 2) Over and over, the Biblical writers present "astonishing facts that the writers, on their own, simply could not have known" (Butt 41).

F. The Bible contains fulfilled prophecies.

- 1) "If someone (or something, like a book) could predict the future and be correct 100% of the time, then obviously that ability came directly from" (Butt 48).
- 2) The Bible contains such accurate predictions.

4. For the purpose of this outline, the author will focus on the topic of prophecy.

5. Before moving into the body of the outline, it would be beneficial to notice four principles of true prophecy (Author's note: These four principles were in a sermon that the author preached in 2009. Unfortunately the author did not document in the sermon from whence they came. These are not original with the author but unfortunately the author cannot give proper credit to its origin).

A. First, true prophecies are stated emphatically.

- 1) They are not stated as maybes or possibilities, but as certainties.
- 2) They are not filled with contingencies.

3) The only exception is if you are dealing with conditional prophecies (the most common being when God would tell Israel that they were going into captivity unless they came back to Him).

4) True prophecies are stated as matters of fact.

B. Second, a significant time frame must elapse between the time the prophecy is made and the time in which it is fulfilled.

1) This is required so that it removes the possibility of an educated guess.

2) Someone could prophesy who is going to win the Super Bowl this year, and they may get it right. This would be an educated guess.

3) Now if someone said that the Browns were going to win in 2040 and that happened, then we might have some questions as to how he knew that.

4) True prophecies remove the possibility of an educated guess.

C. Third, true prophecies involve specific details not vague generalities.

1) One of the most “noted prophets” in recent memory dates back to the 1500s, and a man named Nostradamus.

2) Many have pointed to him as an individual who has predicted recent events.

3) If you have ever read any of his predictions, they are nothing more than vague generalities and ramblings.

4) They could easily refer to numerous different things.

- 5) True prophecies are specific.
6. With those introductory matters out of the way, does the Bible contain true prophecies?
- A. Yes, it does!
 - B. Three points on which to focus our attention.

DISCUSSION:

I. PROPHECIES CONCERNING NATIONS

- A. First let's notice a prophecy concerning Judah and Babylon.
 - 1. The northern kingdom of Israel was taken into Assyrian captivity in 722 BC.
 - 2. At that time the southern kingdom of Judah was spared, but due to the continued idolatry of the people that was going to end.
 - 3. Jeremiah begins prophesying in 626 BC about the coming destruction.
 - 4. In Jeremiah 25 (dated to 605 BC, 20 years before Jerusalem will be destroyed), Jeremiah tells of the utter destruction of Jerusalem.
 - a. "And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans,

and will make it perpetual desolations”
(Jeremiah 25:11-12).

b. And it came to pass just as Jeremiah said. Jerusalem was destroyed, the people were taken, and they remained in captivity for seventy years.

B. Just as God through His prophets had predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, He also predicted the destruction of Babylon.

1. In Jeremiah 50-52 and Isaiah 13-14 the prophets predicted with amazing detail the fall of the most powerful nation in the world roughly 75 years before it happened.

a. In Jeremiah 50:9, Jeremiah said that the conquerors would be a group of nations from the north.

b. At this time none of the nations in the north had the military might to conquer Babylon.

2. Jeremiah made several other remarkable predictions of how this would happen.

a. “Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee; and I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry” (Jeremiah 51:36).

b. “A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols” (Jeremiah 50:38).

- c. "In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 51:39).
- 3. History records that Babylon was conquered by a conglomerate of nations known as the Medo-Persian Empire (located to the north of Babylon) led by Cyrus. The Euphrates River ran under the walls of Babylon which made Babylon capable of outlasting a siege by a conquering nation (Butt 50-51).
 - a. During a drunken feast one night, Cyrus diverted the waters of the Euphrates River thus it was "dried up."
 - b. The soldiers then passed under the wall undetected by the drunken revelers. Cyrus ordered his men to act like drunken partygoers, and, before anyone knew what was taking place, the city was filled with enemy troops and conquered (Butt 50-51).
- C. This is just one example in God's Word among many that depicted with unmatched accuracy the rise and fall of nations.

II. PROPHECIES CONCERNING PEOPLE.

- A. King Cyrus, who we noted above, was mentioned by name by the prophet Isaiah 150 years before he was even born!

1. "That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid" (Isaiah 44:28).
 2. History records that when Cyrus conquered Babylon he released the nations that had been enslaved to return to their homelands to rebuild.
- B. In 2 Kings 18:13, we read of Sennacherib, who was king of Assyria, captured some of the cities of Judah.
1. In 2 Kings 19:32-34, it is prophesied that he would not take the city of Jerusalem. "Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake."
 2. On the Taylor Prism, an artifact that records some of the conquests of Sennacherib, it is recorded that Sennacherib had "Hezekiah shut up like a bird in a cage."
 3. Of course nothing is ever recorded by Sennacherib about conquering Jerusalem because he did not.
 - a. In 2 Kings 19:35ff, an angel of the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrians in one night, and thus the remainder of the army was forced to return home.

- b. Of course Sennacherib would not have recorded such a defeat.
 4. "It was further foretold that the Assyrian king would return to his own land and there fall by the sword (2 Kings 19:7). Some 20 years later, he was assassinated by his own sons, who smote him with the sword, while he was worshipping in his pagan temple" (Jackson 131).
- C. A final person that should be noted is Josiah.
1. "And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee" (1 Kings 13:2).
 2. This prophecy is more than 300 years before Josiah will come upon the scene (Jackson 132).

III. PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE MESSIAH.

A. One of the strongest groups of prophecies are those concerning Jesus, the Christ.

1. Sidney Collett stated that of the 800 prophecies in the Old Testament, no less than 333 are concerning the Messiah, Jesus the Christ (Collett 192).
2. There are prophecies concerning His lineage, the time and place of His coming, His nature, His betrayal, death, burial, and resurrection.

3. All of them being fulfilled in the smallest detail.
4. Over and over in the Gospel Account one reads how this prophecy was fulfilled and that prophecy was fulfilled.
5. Isaiah 53 is a treasure trove of prophecies concerning Jesus.
6. These could not have been given so specifically and fulfilled so perfectly if their origins were not Divine.

B. In his book, *Science Speaks*, mathematician and author Peter W. Stoner selected only eight of the over 300 prophecies concerning Jesus.

1. He estimated the odds of those eight being fulfilled by a person as 1 in 10^{17} . That is one with 17 zeroes behind it. To help us to see that enormity of that number he offered this illustration.
2. Suppose we take 10^{17} silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state 2 feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that it is the right one (Stoner 107).
3. What chance would he have of getting the right one?

C. There is no way that those prophecies were mere guesses! They were inspired by God.

CONCLUSION:

1. We have only just scratched the surface of Biblical prophecy.
 - A. There is so much more that can be studied and said.
 - B. While prophecy is only one category among many that prove the inspiration of the Bible, it is definitely a powerful one.
2. None of these men could have known these things without being told by the all-knowing God.
3. The Bible is indeed inspired by God!

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WHY THERE ARE NO WOMEN PREACHERS IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Cameron Freeman

INTRODUCTION:

1. New Testament Christianity is not a self-guided or self-imposed religion:
 - A. Judges 17:6; 21:25
 - B. Colossians 2:18, 23
2. Many young Christians often attend some type of musical or band practice afterschool.
 - A. Matthew 28:18
 - B. Acts 4:7-12
 - C. Colossians 3:16-17
3. When we discuss doctrinal matters pertinent to the organization and structure of the Lord's Church, we are not dealing with matters of feelings, opinions, nor culture, but matters of doctrine and authority.
4. Why is it that in the New Testament the church of Christ did not have women preachers and why is it that in modern times the church of Christ does not have female preachers?

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT THE WORD OF GOD SAYS.

A. The Word of God is right and true and therefore serves as the standard in all religious matters.

1. Psalm 119:104, 128

2. John 17:17
3. 2 Timothy 2:15
4. James 1:18

B. The Bible speaks concerning the leadership and organization of the Lord's Church:

1. Acts 20:17, 28
2. Philippians 1:1
3. 1 Timothy 3:1-13
4. 1 Peter 5:1-3
5. Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24

C. The Bible also speaks in great detail about the subject of male leadership roles in the church as opposed to female leadership roles (1 Tim. 2:1-15):

1. Paul makes a distinction between males and females (1 Tim. 2:1-8).
 - a. Paul uses the term "men" throughout the first eight verses.
 - b. The original Greek language in which the N.T. was written helps us to understand the differences in the various usages:
 - 1) In the first five verses the Greek term "anthropos" is used for men (vs. 1, 4, 5).
 - 2) "Anthropos" means - humanity, mankind, manface, it refers to both males and females of the human race, (Strong's Concordance- "anthropos").

- 3) In verse eight men is translated from the Greek term “aner” which refers to the male gender only (Strong’s Concordance- “aner”).
2. Paul instructs women on where to place their emphasis (1 Tim. 2:9-10):
 - a. Women are encouraged to focus on modesty, shamefacedness, and sobriety.
 - b. Women are also encouraged to be engaged in good works.
3. Women are instructed to remain silent when it comes to learning and leadership matters (1 Tim. 2:11-12):
 - a. She is to learn in silence with all subjection.
 - b. She cannot teach or usurp authority over the man, but once again she is instructed to be silent.
 - 1) The term “teach” is from the Greek word “*didasko*”.
 - 2) In other words Paul is stating emphatically that a woman cannot give a didactic discourse (sermon) wherein she is teaching men and over men.
 - 3) Simply put, a woman cannot teach or preach to men.
 - 4) Jesus found fault with the church at Thyatira because it allowed a woman

named Jezebel to teach and to seduce his servants (Rev. 2:20-21).

- c. The term “silence” has reference to quietness.
- 4. Paul then gives the reasoning as to why women can’t lead in the church (1 Tim. 2:13-14):
 - a. Paul’s first reason was that Adam was formed first (Gen. 2:7, 15-25).
 - b. Wayne Jackson commented on this passage by saying:
 - 1) “That there was a chronological priority in the creation events.”
 - 2) “The point is, Paul declares that in the creation order of humankind there was a priority.”
 - c. Paul then identifies the fact that Adam was not deceived in the transgression, but the woman (Eve) was.

D. Women can still honor and glorify God through their childbearing, faith, love and holiness (v. 15).

II. WHAT THE WORLD IS SAYING.

- A. The Word of God is very transparent when it comes to the equality of women and also their roles in the Lord’s Church.
- B. Women of the world and in religion need to revisit what God has taught on the subject of leadership and leadership roles in the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 11:3, 8-9).

- C. Women in the world have been granted equality in many areas such as business, finance, education, sports, etc. and are under the impression that that equality translates into leadership roles in religion.
- D. The world is saying that a woman can do anything that a man can do sometimes better, and even that, often carries over into the realm of preaching, teaching, and shepherding.
- E. The world is telling women what Nathan told King David, and that is “to go ahead and do what’s in your heart” or what seems best for you (2 Sam. 7:3).
- F. Many times these so-called encouraging words are to the detriment and disobedience of God’s plain truth in Scripture.
- G. It is commonplace in religion to see women practicing that which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures:
1. Women often leading worship services.
 2. Women often leading in singing and also leading choirs.
 3. Women are now leading in communion.
 4. Women in many places are leading in public prayers.
 5. Many women are claiming to be utilizing their God-given abilities and gifts in teaching publicly.
 6. It is no wonder that if women are leading in all other facets of worship that they are preaching too:

- a. Many women are considered “pastors” and “reverends”, and many consider themselves as such.
- b. Many wives of denominational preachers and televangelists are considered “first ladies” or “co-pastors”.
- c. There are several famous women preachers who claim to speak in tongues.
- d. Many women are obtaining degrees in Bible, teaching the Scriptures at the university level, and even leading large assemblies while men are present.

H. Sadly, what women are practicing in denominations and in the world has crept into the Lord’s Church.

III. WHAT WOMEN SHOULD BE DOING.

- A. God has also shown us in Scripture the value of women, especially in the Church.
- B. The Bible reveals plainly that men and women are equal in terms of worth salvation and judgment, but they have differing roles:
 1. Galatians 3:28-29.
 2. 1 Timothy 3:1-7.
 3. 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- C. Although a woman cannot teach, preach, or usurp authority over the man, she can honor God in a variety of other ways.

D. The New Testament helps us to see how important women are to and in the Church of Christ:

1. Women financially supported the public ministry of Christ (Luke 8:1-3).
2. There were women present at the grave sight of Christ who were then instructed to inform his disciples to meet Christ in Galilee (Mark 16:1-8).
3. There were Christian women in the first century who were filled with good works and hospitality (Acts 9:36-39; 16:14-15,40).
4. Priscilla helped her husband by teaching Apollos the word of God more perfectly (Acts 18:26).
5. Paul considered Phoebe a servant of the church who had aided him and many others (Rom. 16:1-2).
6. There were women who labored with Paul in the gospel (Phi. 4:3).
7. Timothy's mother and grandmother were responsible for his spiritual upbringing (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15).
8. Paul reminds Titus to instruct the older women to teach the younger women by example, experience, and doctrine (Titus 2:3-5).

E. All of the above-mentioned examples of godly women served God and the cause of Christ without violating the creative order (Gen. 2:7, 15-25).

F. Let us be reminded that God determined the roles of leadership in the Church before it became a reality (Eph. 4:11-12; 3:9-11).

G. Men nor women have the right to try to change, modify, or substitute God's truth for their own pleasure or gain.

CONCLUSION:

1. The church of Christ is the New Testament church that seeks to honor God by its obedience to God's Word.
2. The reason that the church of Christ does not have women preachers is because we don't have any biblical authority to have women teaching, preaching, or usurping authority over men. Neither do we have any scriptural example where women preached over men.
3. We believe and affirm that God's pattern must be followed in order to have God's approval for religion.
4. Let us all be like King David, who, after realizing that the ark of the covenant had been transported incorrectly, thus costing Uzzah his life, King David realized that he needed to seek God after the due order (1 Chr. 15:11-13; Exo. 25:10-14).

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE?

Robert Jeffries

INTRODUCTION:

1. One of the most controversial and emotionally charged subjects out of any that we could study together.
2. This subject is so controversial that many pulpits stay silent on it.
3. There are some subjects that may be seen as only a modern issue. Some have said that about marriage, divorce, and remarriage.
4. Did you know questions arose concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage, during the days of Jesus' earthly ministry?
5. In fact, when we open our Bibles to Matthew 19, Jesus is going to address the subject for our study.
6. For this study, the following questions are going to be addressed.
 - A. What Does The Bible Say About Marriage?
 - B. What Does The Bible Say About Divorce?
 - C. What Does The Bible Say About Remarriage?

DISCUSSION:

- I. **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT MARRIAGE?**
 - A. It Is A Place Of Honor.

1. “Marriage is **honourable** in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Hebrews 13:4).
2. Honorable means, “valuable and precious” (Strong).
3. Do you view your marriage as something that is valuable and precious?

B. The Participants Of Marriage.

1. “The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a **man** to put away his **wife** for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them **male and female**, And said, For this cause shall a **man** leave **father and mother**, and shall cleave to his **wife**: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:3-6).
2. Jesus takes them back all the way to the beginning of time to show them God’s plan for the participants of marriage. “And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of

the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.* Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Genesis 2:18-25).

3. There are three participants in marriage.
 - a. God.
 - b. Man.
 - c. Woman.

C. The Purpose of Marriage.

1. To provide for social needs.
 - a. “And the LORD God said, ***It is not good that the man should be alone***; I will make him an help meet for him” (Genesis 2:18).
 - b. “**Two are better than one**; because they have a good reward for their labour” (Ecclesiastes 4:9).
2. To provide for physical needs.

- a. God placed within us certain desires.
 - b. “Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Hebrews 13:4).
3. To replenish the earth.
- a. “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and **replenish the earth**, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:28).
 - b. “And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and **replenish the earth**” (Genesis 9:1).

D. The Permanency of Marriage.

1. How long is the marriage bond designed to last?
2. “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, **let not man put asunder**” (Matthew 19:6).
3. “Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is **bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband**” (Romans 7:1-2).
4. When we understand God’s design for marriage, it is unfortunate that “the percent of ‘I do’s’

become 'I don't anymore' within five years of marriage; and within ten years, twenty-five percent divorce" (Cain 239).

II. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT DIVORCE?

A. What is divorce?

1. "The action or an instance of legally dissolving a marriage" (Webster's).
2. "A judicial declaration dissolving a marriage in whole or in part, especially one that releases the marriage partners from all matrimonial obligations" (www.Dictionary.com).

B. The KJV will use the word divorce (1x), divorced (4x), and bill of/writing of divorcement (6x). Did you know that there are other words and phrases to look for in the KJV that refer to divorce?

1. "For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth **putting away**: for *one* covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously" (Malachi 2:16).
2. "It hath been said, Whosoever shall **put away** his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Matthew 5:31-32).

3. "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall **put away** his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:9).
4. "Whosoever **putteth away** his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband committeth adultery" (Luke 16:18).

C. How does God view divorce?

1. He hates it.
2. "**For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away:** for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously" (Malachi 2:16).

III. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT REMARRIAGE?

A. Perhaps, most would be in agreement with everything that has been written so far. However, the aspect of remarriage is where most of the controversy stems.

B. Who can divorce and remarry?

1. "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, **Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?**" (Matthew 19:3).

2. There were two schools of thought in the first century among the Pharisees concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage.
 - a. Some held to Rabbi Hillel's teaching. He believed that one could put their spouse away for any reason (Crain 155).
 - b. Some held to Rabbi Shammai's teaching. He believed that one could only put away their spouse for fornication (Ibid).
3. Jesus uses neither one as His source of authority as He answers their question.
 - a. Jesus will take them all the way back to the beginning (Matthew 19:4).
 - b. "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for **fornication**, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:9).
4. Summation: Remarriage is only permissible if one's spouse passes away or if they have put away their spouse for fornication.

C. Additional questions about remarriage.

1. Does Matthew 19:9 only apply to Christians?
 - a. There are numerous individuals that hold to this teaching.

- b. Evidently, they believe that God’s law on marriage, divorce, and remarriage only applies to God’s people.
 - c. The word “whosoever” applies to all. Consider the following passages:
 - 1) “And I say unto you, **Whosoever** shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Matthew 19:9).
 - 2) “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).
 - 3) “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And **whosoever** will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).
2. Does abuse count as a reason to divorce and remarry Scripturally?
- a. One can separate from the relationship if one’s spouse is making it difficult.
 - b. However, nothing is said about remarriage because of abuse.
 - c. “And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband: But and if she depart, **let her**

remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away *his wife*" (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).

3. Is pornography grounds for divorce and remarriage?
 - a. Some have concluded that pornography counts as fornication.
 - b. The Greek word for fornication is "*porneia*."
 - c. *Porneia* means "sexual intercourse" (Strong).
 - d. Looking and lusting is not the same as sexual intercourse.
4. Can baptism wash away an adulterous marriage?
 - a. A better question might be, "will baptism make a sinful relationship acceptable?"
 - b. Can a homosexual be baptized, and remain a homosexual?
 - c. Baptism does not make an unholy action or union a holy one.
5. What are the rights of the guilty party?
 - a. One must remain celibate.
 - b. One can be reconciled with their spouse.

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WHAT CAN WE KNOW ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

INTRODUCTION:

1. In beginning any study of the Holy Spirit one should be aware that God's Word furnishes **all** that is needed to make a person *telios* (*complete*) unto every good work required by God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; KJV).
2. One should also be aware that the Holy Spirit exclusively uses the Word of God to convert and convict (Eph. 6:17).
3. The "all sufficiency" of the Word of God is the basis for any logical, biblical understanding of the Holy Spirit's work and being. He does not operate separate and apart from the written message for it is the seed of God's kingdom (Luke 8:11).
4. The study of the Holy Spirit is a much neglected theme and, hence, there is much ignorance and many false conclusions drawn concerning Him and His being and work.
5. This study is not concerned with what the Holy Spirit **could** do, but what the Bible says He does do.
6. The proposition for this study is: "The scriptures teach that in conviction and conversion of sinners, and in leading those converted in their Christian duties, the Holy Spirit operates, exercises influence, upon the human heart or mind only through the written Word of God today. In fact, it is denied that the Holy Spirit ever operated immediately upon the heart of any one for his particular benefit in order to change one's nature, or to force his involuntary obedience.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE NATURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

- A. The Godhead has three Who have all the essence of Deity.
- B. The three members are mentioned in Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 13:14; and Romans 15:30.
- C. There is God the Father: Genesis 1:1; Matthew 6:9.
- D. There is God the Son: John 1:1-3; 1 John 3:16.
- E. There is God the Holy Spirit: Acts 5:3-4. The Holy Spirit is co-eternal with God and was present in creation (Gen. 1:1-2) as were the other two (Gen. 1:1; John 1:3). [See Hebrews 9:14].

II. THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

- A. He is not an element as some vapor or mysterious, incomprehensible influence or a glorified "it."
- B. Note John 16:13-14 and the masculine pronouns.
 1. He is omniscient (1 Cor. 2:10-14).
 2. He is omnipotent (Mic. 3:8).
 3. He is omnipresent (Psa. 139:7-10).
 4. He is eternal (Heb. 9:14).
 5. He is "good" (Neh. 9:20).
 6. He could be blasphemed (Mat. 12:31-32).
 7. He teaches (John 4:27; 1 Cor. 2:13).
 8. He testifies (John 15:26).
 9. He guides (John 16:12-13).
 10. He can be lied to (Acts 5:3).
 11. He can be resisted (Acts 7:51).

12. He leads (Acts 16:6).
13. He forbids (Acts 16:7).
14. He has a mind (Rom, 8:27).
15. He loves (Rom. 15:30).
16. He searches (1 Cor. 2:10).
17. He has knowledge (1 Cor. 2:11).
18. He has His own will (1 Cor. 2:11).
19. He can be grieved (Eph. 4:30).
20. He speaks (1 Tim. 4:1).
21. He can be despised (Heb. 10:29).
22. He intercedes (Rom. 8:26-27).

C. The Holy Spirit is a divine personality and the third person of the Godhead.

III. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

- A. In creation: Genesis 1:1; Psalm 19:1; 33:6 [God the Father]. John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:2 [God the Son]. Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13 [God the Holy Spirit]. How did the three work in creation? Note Psalm 33:6.
- B. In the Old Testament: Genesis 6:5 [God the Father]. 1 Peter 3:18-21; 1 Corinthians 10:1-14 [God the Son]. How? Note 2 Peter 2:5.
- C. In the New Testament: John 16:15 [God the Father]. John 16:14 [God the Son]. John 16:13 [God the Holy Spirit]. How? John 16:13; 2 Corinthians 5:18-2 [the apostles].

- D. The material creation was accomplished by the Word (Psa. 33:6-9). The creation was organized by “he said” (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26). Natural laws were then given (Gen. 1:11; a “seed”). The miracles of creation ceased after the law of “kind” was given.
- E. The spiritual creation as accomplished by the Word (Eph. 5:26; Luke 8:11). The church was organized through miraculously guided preaching (Acts 2:1-47; 6:1-6; 14:23). Then, the spiritual law was given (Rom. 3:27; 8:2; Heb. 9:16-7;--the “seed” was given). Miracles ceased after the law was given (1 Cor. 13:8-13).
- F. There can be no fruit when seed is not planted and there are no converts or Christians where the Word of God has not gone. God’s law is immutable (Isa. 40:8; 1 pet. 1:23).

IV. THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

- A. Influence is the “act or power of producing an effect without apparent force or direct authority.
- B. Just because a thing is spiritual, does not mean it is “mystical.” The Holy Spirit’s influence is through the Word and not mysterious at all.
- C. Man has five external senses: Tasting, smelling, touching, hearing, and seeing.
- D. Man has five internal senses that are totally dependent on the external senses. There is perception [direct acquaintance with anything through any one of the five external senses]. There is reflection [mental consideration of the things perceived]. There is memory

[power to reproduce and identify what has been perceived and considered]. There is reason [power to comprehend and decide on what one has seen and considered and remembered]. There is judgment [pronouncing a formal decision based on the foregoing].

- E. Try to think of something you have never learned or did not come to you through your senses and then think of the void between any two spirits whether human or divine (1 Cor. 2:11; John. 16:13-15). And, think of void between the Divine and human (1 Cor. 2:11-14). The “gap” is always bridged by words!

CONCLUSION:

1. The Holy Spirit is a being not an it.
2. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead.
3. The Holy Spirit works through His message and only through His message (Eph. 6:17).

IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST JUST ANOTHER DENOMINATION?

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

INTRODUCTION:

1. It is always a joy supreme to come to Nesbit and speak on this par excellent lectureship each winter.
2. Roman/Catholicism; Protestantism, Islam, Mormonism, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc. are used frequently in modern religious circles.
3. As common as they are used today, not the first one of the above is mentioned anywhere in the Bible.
4. Since we have in Sacred Scripture all that God wants us to believe, practice, preach and defend, then all these man-made religions are without one iota of divine authority.
5. Hence, they have no Heavenly right to exist (2 Pet. 1:3).

DISCUSSION:

I. WHY DENOMINATIONALISM IS WRONG OR SINFUL:

A. Denominationalism is characterized by common threads.

B. They are:

1. Religious division is all right (1 Cor. 1:10ff)
2. There are many ways to heaven - not just one way (John 14:6).
3. One church is just as good as another (Mat. 16:18-19).

4. One religion is not to be preferred above another.
5. Worship God as one pleases / since there is no one standard (John 4:24; Col. 3:17).
6. One name is just as good as another since there is nothing in a name. (Acts 4:12; 11:26; 26:28).
7. Nearly all denominations will deny that baptism has any link with salvation – NONE at all (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:1-4)
8. Baptism can be performed by sprinkling, pouring or immersion according to human preference (Rom. 6:1-4; Col. 2:12).
9. Church organization differs from one group to another (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-13).
10. It is not necessary to have the Lord's Supper each first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20-34).
11. Mechanical music is as pleasing to God/just singing only (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16-17).
12. The Bible is NOT our sole source of authority in matters of religion (Col. 3:17).

II. CHURCHES OF CHRIST ARE CHARACTERIZED BY:

- A. One will find the following among all sound, solid and faithful congregations of God's people.
- B. Each of the following is unique in every sense of that term.
 1. Demanding a "thus saith the Lord" for all we do in the worship and service to our Heavenly

- Father and His Son. (1 Pet. 4:11; Matt. 22: 36ff; Gal. 4:30-31; Col. 3:17).
2. Rightly dividing or handling aright the truth is demanded (2 Tim. 2:15).
 3. We are amenable to Christ and Christianity - not to Moses and Sinai (Heb. 1;1-3).
 4. Hearing, faith, repentance, confession and immersion are adhered to tenaciously (Rom. 10:17; Acts 2, 8, 10, 16).
 5. Singing, prayer, teaching or preaching, the Lord's Supper each first day of the week and the contribution each Sunday are imperatives with us (Eph. 5:19; Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20-34; 16:1-2).
 6. Each congregation is self-governing or self-independent (Rev. 2-3; Acts 20:28-32; 1 Pet. 5:1-3; Phil. 1;1).
 7. There are no central headquarters for churches of Christ except in heaven (Phil. 3:20). Christ is THE HEAD.
 8. The organization of the Lord's church has elders to oversee; deacons to serve; preachers to preach; teachers to teach and all members working faithfully (1 Pet. 5:1-3; 1 Tim. 3:1-15; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 15:58).
 9. Biblical names are important (Acts 4:12; 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16).

10. We are not to add to, subtract from, modify or change the Word of God (Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18-19).
11. We are to love God supremely, neighbor as self; our brethren as Christ loves us and our enemies (Matt. 22:36ff; John 13:34-35; Matt. 5:43-44).
12. We believe in calling Bible things by Bible names, speaking where it speaks, being silent where it is silent and doing what God has commanded us (1 Pet. 4:11).
13. We believe that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, the life and the only way to God and heaven at last (John 14:6).
14. The mission of the church is threefold: evangelism, edification and benevolence (Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 14:12; Gal. 6:10; James 1:27).
15. We believe God, Christ and the Holy Spirit form the Godhead, Godhood, Deity or The Timeless Trinity (Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:9).
16. We seek to love the good, the right, the truth and oppose every vestige of error (Phil. 4:8; 2 Thess. 2:10-12; 1 Thess. 5:21).
17. We object strongly the direct operation of the Holy Spirit on either saint or sinner (John 14-16).
18. We accept fully and forcefully Biblical inspiration (verbal and plenary), Biblical all-sufficiency; Biblical authority; Biblical ethics, Biblical food for

the soul, Biblical inexhaustibility, Biblical eternity and Biblical finality (Ps. 119).

19. We stand for Biblical translations that are accurate, reverent, readable, understandable and precious. WE are not dealing with newspapers that are out of date in one or two days. Neither are we dealing with comic books. We are dealing with God's Almighty Word or Will. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1;21).
20. All we know or can know about heaven and hell is set forth within Sacred Scripture (Rev. 21,22). The original word for hell is Gehenna. This term about hell is mentioned 12 times in the New Testament. Jesus used it 11 of these times (7 in Matthew, 3 in Mark and 1 in Luke). James, the Lord's brother, used it the 12th time (James 3:6).

CONCLUSION:

1. We have never called ourselves a denomination though liberals have with frequency.
2. We have denied we are a denomination and will never become one as long as we are guided and governed by God's Word.
3. NO, WE ARE NOT A DENOMINATION!!
4. I have been a member of the Lord's church for 75 years and NEVER viewed the church we read about in the Bible in any sort of denominational sense. I am way too old to change from that Scriptural stance!!