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"... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." - Ephesians 5:23

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## THE NATURE OF "TRUTH"

Part One

By Ted J. Clarke

### INTRODUCTION

"Nature" is defined as "the inherent character or basic constitution of a person or thing" (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition). The same resource defines "truth" as "the state of being the case; FACT; the body of real things, events, and facts . . . ; the property (as of a statement) of being in accord with fact or reality." The inherent (built-in) character of truth is that it constitutes real things, facts that are a physical or spiritual reality. Guesses, hunches, feelings, or desires cannot be set forth as truth unless there are facts that establish them as truth. If facts support a proposition then it is not a guess, feeling, etc.; it becomes an established truth.

The Bible sets forth the proposition that truth is to be sought over ignorance, supposition, and what is false and erroneous. God is a God of truth (Deuteronomy 32:4). He cannot lie (Titus 1:2; cf. Hebrews 6:18). God is "abundant in goodness and truth" (Exodus 34:6). Those who serve God are to be "men of truth" who will "serve Him in truth" (1 Samuel 12:24; Joshua 24:14). Those who wish to abide in the presence of God must speak "the truth in his heart" (Psalm 15:2) and "call upon him in truth" (Psalms 145:18). The psalmist also said, "all thy commandments are truth" (119:151); and, "the entirety of Your word is true" (119:160, NKJV). The inspired wise man said, "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding" (Proverbs 23:23). The truth is always worth the cost paid to obtain it and

is too valuable to sell (meaning to surrender it or compromise it) at any price. God will judge in truth those who reject or distort the truth (Psalm 96:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

### OLD TESTAMENT TRUTH

While the Old Testament (hereafter OT) is true as God revealed it, it does not constitute the pattern for New Testament (hereafter NT) Christians to follow either in becoming children of God or in worshipping Him. This is not to say the OT is not true or has no value for Christians. Its truths have tremendous value for us in the NT system of Christ. We could not properly understand the New without the Old.

The true history of the Creation, sin entering the Garden of Eden, the catastrophic Flood that covered the world, the call of Abram and promises made to him, and the development of the nation of Israel from the twelve sons of Jacob - all of these things set the scene for the rest of the OT. This history of Israel in Egypt, the Exodus, the Conquest of Canaan, and the ups and downs of the nation over nearly 1500 years all pave the way for the coming of Christ (read Acts 7 and Galatians 3). But the Law of Moses has been done away, nailed to the cross of Christ to make way for His universal covenant with all men (Colossians 2:14-17; Galatians 3:23-29). The entire NT book of Hebrews affirms the change of law from Moses' to Christ's and demonstrates the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old one. Read it.

Of course, the hundreds of prophecies of Christ's coming,

from Genesis 3:15 to Malachi 4 are found "written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms" (Luke 24:44). The apostles Peter and Paul both appealed to the OT (as we now know it) to prove from prophecies that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 3:18, 22-26; 13: 16-42). If we try to convince anyone today of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, turning to the OT prophecies of the coming Messiah and showing how Jesus fulfilled them is a powerful demonstration. The same would be necessary in trying to convert to following Christ any Jews who believe that the OT is truly God's word.

Additionally, there are eternal principles from the OT that are applicable in every age. For example, God has always rewarded faith and obedience and held out punishment for the unbelieving and disobedient. The apostle Paul pointed out this principle in First Corinthians 10:1-12. After giving some examples of those with whom God was not pleased, he wrote: "Now these things were our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted" (verse 6). He also wrote, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (verse 11). Think also of the improper worship experiences of Cain (Genesis 4); Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10); King Saul (1 Samuel 13 & 15); King David and Uzzah (2 Samuel 6 & 1 Chronicles 15); and King Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26).

The principles gleaned from these examples and others that could be listed provide valuable lessons for us today as to how God considers abuses of His requirements for worship. Although we do



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not worship with animal sacrifices, incense, or the Ark of the Covenant, these examples show that unless we do only as God authorizes (what God says, like God says and when He says) our worship will be unacceptable and we will come under condemnation. On this subject Jesus repeated the words of Isaiah 29:13 (OT Greek Septuagint), saying, *"But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"* (Matthew 15:9).

Also, the OT Scriptures are valuable for reasons Paul cited in Romans 15:4 - *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."* Besides learning the lessons we noted above, we can gain "comfort" and "hope" from the OT. We see every one of God's promises fulfilled just as He said: God is faithful in all things; God never fails. We can truly put our trust and reliance in the God of the OT. That provides comfort and hope for us under Christ's law and new covenant. We serve an all powerful, all knowing, ever present God, who will, in His own

time, usher into eternal glory all who love and faithfully serve him through Jesus Christ.

## THE PRESENT TRUTH

As we pointed out above, while the OT has tremendous value for Christians it is not our pattern for salvation or worship in the Lord's church. Remember to read Second Corinthians 3; Galatians 3 as well as the entire NT book of Hebrews. The matters reported in the OT are all true - factual and real history, but God has replaced the old covenant with the new, and the new is not like the old (Hebrews 8:8-13). Many religious denominations, however, still run back to the OT to try to find authority for their unauthorized religious practices. It won't work.

In some verses dealing with NT worship to God, the apostle Paul said, *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him"* (Colossians 3:16-17). To do something "in the name of Jesus" is to do something by His authority, because He has authorized it, either personally or through His inspired writers of the NT (Matthew 10:40; Luke 10:16; John 13:20; 1 Corinthians 14:37).

The present truth is that in the worship of the NT church, the only type of music that is authorized by the NT is singing. Every reference to music in Christian worship is to singing (Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12; 13:15; James 5:13). In their zeal to bring instrumental music into the worship of the NT church, many of its advocates run back to the OT psalms and elsewhere to find authority. Consider the following questions from another gospel preacher on this matter. Think carefully as you attempt to answer these questions.

"When you appeal to the Old Testament to justify its use [instrumental music in NT worship], is that not an admission that the New Testament does not authorize its

use? If it is authorized in the New Testament, then why appeal to the Old Testament to try to justify it?

"If it was right in the Old Testament, was it not right because it was mentioned in the Old Testament? Would you try to prove it right by the Old Testament if it was not mentioned in the Old Testament?

"If it had to be mentioned in the Old Testament to make it right, would it not follow that it must be mentioned in the New Testament to justify its use today, since we live under the New Testament (Col. 2:14)?

"To appeal to the Old Testament is an admission that for it to be right there, it had to be mentioned. Does not this argument cancel the argument made by saying, 'Where does the New Testament say we cannot use it?'

"If the Old Testament is authority for mechanical instruments of music, then why is it not authority for other things as well? When it [the OT] was authority for instrumental music, was it not also authority for burning incense, animal sacrifice, Sabbath keeping and stoning those who broke the Sabbath? When and how did it cease to be authority for burning incense, animal sacrifice, Sabbath keeping and stoning Sabbath breakers, but continue to be authority for instrumental music?" (Franklin Camp, *The Visitor*, Adamsville, AL).

## CONCLUSION

The nature of truth is such that we have factually demonstrated that the OT law has been taken out of the way and replaced by the New law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21; Colossians 2:14). There are no facts that allow Christians to perpetuate the elements of the law of Moses. Instrumental music in worship was part of that law that was done away in Christ. There are other arguments that are frequently made to try to justify using mechanical instrument of music in NT worship of Christ's church, but I am convinced that Scripture can answer each of them. The present truth is that in Christian worship the NT authorizes only singing, without mechanical instrumental accompaniment.

In future articles we will deal with some other issues practiced by various denominations, such as infant baptism and infant membership in the church, a special priesthood with special clothing and titles, believing that church buildings are holy, Sabbath keeping, etc. These are matters for which many seek justification in the OT, because there is no NT authority for such practices. The truth will not permit the practice of such things under Christ's New Covenant. (More to follow)

## FILLING YOUR LIFE

by Orville Buchanan (Deceased)  
[FCGN May, 1953]

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6).

Friends, do you hunger and thirst after righteousness, or do you hunger and thirst after the material things of life; things such as money, movies, liquor, gambling and riotous living? If the latter, then those are the things with which your life will be filled. Our lives are filled with what we hunger and thirst after, be it good or bad.

New use this example. Take a glass and fill it with muddy water and let it represent a wicked life. If we want to fill that same glass with clear water, we first have to get all the muddy water out. If we pour the clear water into the glass of muddy water we still have muddy contaminated water.

To have our lives filled with righteousness we must get rid of our wickedness. We do so by hearing the word, believing, repenting, confessing our Christ and being baptized (Rom. 10:17; Luke 13:3; Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9; Acts 2:38). We rise from the watery grave a new creature (2 Cor. 5:15, 17; Rom. 6:4). Old things have passed away (Gal. 6:15). Since then we are a new creature, we should desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby (1 Peter 2:2).

If we fill our lives with the word of God, we will grow spiritually and add to our "faith, virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly

kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"But he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. (2 Peter 1:5-9).

## JESUS OR MOHAMMED?

by Rod Rutherford

One of the fastest growing religions in the world today is Islam. Islam began in Arabia in 622 A.D. It was started by Mohammed, a camel driver who could not read or write. Mohammed became discouraged with idol worship in his home city of Mecca. He had learned from Jews and Christians that there is only one true God.

Mohammed claimed the angel, Gabriel, came to him. He said Gabriel told him he had been chosen to be the last and greatest prophet of Allah. At a temple in Mecca called the "ka'aba," a black stone was worshipped. Three hundred and sixty idols were also worshipped there. One of these idols was "Allah," the moon god. Mohammed said Allah was the one true god that all men should worship.

Mohammed also claimed that Allah revealed his will to him. This message came to him in various ways, according to Mohammed and his followers. Sometimes Gabriel appeared to him. Sometimes he had dreams or visions. Mohammed's followers memorized these messages. After Mohammed died, they were written down. During the days of Caliphs Umar and Uthman, Mohammed's successors, these "revelations" were collected together to form the Qu'ran (or Koran). The Qu'ran is accepted by Moslems as their holy scriptures.

Mohammed and his followers were persecuted in Mecca. They ran away to Medina in 622. Here Mohammed became the ruler of the city. He formed an army and robbed the rich caravans going to Mecca. Before he died, Mohammed's army had conquered all

of Arabia. Within a hundred years after his death, Mohammed's followers conquered a great empire stretching from Spain across North Africa and the Middle East all the way to India. People who refused to convert to Islam were either killed or heavily taxed. Therefore, many became Moslems.

Is Islam the true way to God? Is Allah the true God? Is Mohammed the last and greatest prophet? Is the Qu'ran a true revelation from God or is it the words of men? These are important questions. Thousands of people are seeking the answers to them. Mohammed called Christians and Jews "people of the Book." He taught that the books of Moses, the Psalms, and the Gospels in the Bible are true revelations of God. What does the Bible say about these questions?

The Bible warns that a different message from the gospel must not be accepted even though it comes from an angel: "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6-8). Mohammed claimed Gabriel gave him his message. But according to the Bible, we must not accept another message even if it comes from an angel. Moslems say the Qu'ran is God's final revelation to man. But the New Testament, which was written more than 600 years before the Qu'ran, claims it is God's final revelation to man (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:3; Jude 3). If the Bible is true, then the Qu'ran is false. Mohammed claimed the Bible was true, so according to his own claims, the Qu'ran must be false!

Was Mohammed the last and greatest of the prophets of God? Mohammed accepted the books of Moses (the first five books of the old Testament) as being inspired of God. In one of them, God said He would raise up a prophet like Moses from among his brethren (Deuteronomy 18: 15-19). The brethren of Moses were the children of Israel who were later



known as the Jews. Mohammed was not a Jew. He was an Arab. Therefore, he could not be the prophet God raised up among his people. Who is the Prophet God raised up? The apostle Peter tells that his Prophet raised up by God was Jesus Christ (Acts 3:22-26).

Mohammed admitted that Jesus was one of the prophets of God. We know that a true prophet of God does not lie. Therefore, whatever Jesus said must be true. Please notice that Jesus said about Himself: "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). Jesus also said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

Is Allah the one true God? Is Allah the same as the God we read about in the Bible? The answer to both of these questions is "NO!" The Bible teaches there is one God (Divine Nature of Godhood) (Acts 17:29; James 2:19). There are, however, three Persons who possess the Divine Nature. They are the Father (Matthew 6:9; Ephesians 4:6); the Son (John 1:1-3, 14; Colossians 2:9); and the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3,4). Moslems reject the teaching of the Bible concerning the Godhead. They deny that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God (John 1:18; 3:16). Moslems claim to accept the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, but these books teach that Jesus Christ is God's Son. The very books which Moslems agree come from God, disagrees with their teaching.

We have learned that according to Mohammed's own teachings, the Qu'ran cannot be the true word of God, nor can Allah be the true God. Neither can Mohammed be God's prophet.

Mohammed was a strong leader of men. He formed an army and conquered a great empire. However, he was a false prophet. Therefore, his teachings must be rejected. Mohammed has led millions of people astray. Those who follow him are lost (Matthew 15: 13, 14). Jesus Christ is the only Way to God (John 14:6). All spiritual blessings are to be found in Him (Ephesians 1:3). He alone can give eternal life (1 John 5:11,12).

"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom He also made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1,2). We must listen to God's Son today in order to be saved (Acts 3:23). God's Son, Jesus Christ, tells us we must hear and believe His gospel (John 3:16; 8:24); repent of all our sins (Luke 13:3); confess Him before men (Matthew 10:32,33); and be baptized in order to be saved (Mark 16: 15, 16).

Which will you follow? God or Allah? The Bible or the Qu'ran? Jesus or Mohammed? You must choose! Your eternal happiness depends upon it.

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### GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (1 Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

### THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

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