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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 Two

By Ted J. Clarke

REVIEW

In Part One of this series (Feb. 2003), we showed that while the Old Testament (OT) was once God's Law for Israel, from Mt. Sinai to the cross of Christ, it has been replaced by the Law of Christ (Colossians 2:14; 1 Corinthians 9:21; Romans 8:2; James 1:25).

While there are eternal principles and examples from the OT that are applicable in every age and are repeated in the New Testament (NT), the New Covenant is not like the Old (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:6,11; Hebrews 8:8-13). A good bit of the teaching in the NT books of Romans, Galatians, and all of Hebrews deals with the cessation of the Old Law and the establishment of Christ's New Testament system. In spite of the plain teaching on this matter, many still try to inject OT teaching into the NT Law of Christ. Part One of this series dealt with the attempt to use the OT to establish authority for the use of mechanical instrumental music in the worship of the NT church of Christ. There are many other things that are imposed upon the NT from the OT without any authority to do so.

THE SABBATH

There are several denominations that believe that the day of worship under Christ's NT system is still the sabbath, the seventh day of the week; what we know as Saturday. There are Seventh-Day Adventists, Seventh-Day Baptists, Seventh-Day Church of God, Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God, and others who contend we must observe the sabbath as a day of worship. Actually, Protestant denomi-

nationalism unwittingly gives support to this erroneous view every time it contends we are still under the Ten Commandments!

Protestantism says God changed the sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week, our Sunday. There is not one speck of truth in that statement. God did change the day of worship under the Law of Christ from the seventh to the first day (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17-26; 16: 1-2), but no where did He call it the sabbath. It is noteworthy that while several of the principles of the Ten Commandments are given as binding in the NT (cf. Romans 13:9), **the sabbath is never mentioned as being bound upon NT Christians!** In fact, the sabbath is specifically mentioned as part of "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and [Christ] took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14). According to Colossians 2:16-17, "the sabbath days" were "a shadow of things to come," but the substance is "the body is of Christ." The first day of the week worship under the NT is a new day for a New Law. More on this later.

THE SABBATH WAS LIMITED

When was the sabbath given? Genesis 2:3 clearly states that "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it," but there is no evidence that He made that known until He gave the commandment to Israel some 2500 years later. There is no reference to any of the patriarchs being given the seventh-day or sabbath commands, nor is there any reference to them keeping the sabbath. In fact, the Scriptures say

specifically **when** God made known His sabbath command "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: **And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath**, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant" (Nehemiah 9:13-14). When did God make known His sabbath command? When He came down to Mt. Sinai and gave the OT Law to Moses! The sabbath was not given at creation to all mankind. It was given as a special sign to Israel. During the exodus march to Mt. Sinai God did give Israel some sabbath instruction (Exodus 16:4-5, 22-30), but the fullness of the sabbath command with its penalties was not made known until Mt. Sinai and later (Exodus 20: 8-10; Deut. 5:12-15).

To whom was the sabbath given? Was it given to all mankind? No, it was given to Israel, those whom God brought out of Egypt and their succeeding generations. "And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, **Hear, O Israel**, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us who are all of us here alive this day" (Deuteronomy 5:1-3). Moses continued his speaking by repeating to Israel the Ten Commandments, including the sabbath law (verses 12-15).

The sabbath was a "sign" to Israel from God, not to all mankind. In speaking of Israel's exodus, God said: "Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the

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land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them" (Ezekiel 20:10-12). To whom did God give His sabbaths? To Israel. Why did He give them the sabbath? To be a sign between God and Israel.

How long was the sabbath to last? "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you **throughout your generations**; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defleth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the

sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed" (Exo. 31:12-17).

Since the sabbath was given to Israel "throughout their generations ... for a perpetual covenant ... forever," does this mean the sabbath is still binding in the Christian age? **No!** The sabbath was binding upon Israel as long as the OT lasted and Israel was God's chosen people, but with the coming of Christ's NT system the Old law was done away. Israel's generations as God's chosen people or nation have ceased. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.** And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:26-29). Several things in the OT were stated to last "throughout their generations." The Passover (Exodus 12:14); incense (30:8); burnt offerings (29:42); holy anointing oil (30:31); Aaronic everlasting priesthood (40:15). Since Hebrews 7:11-14 clearly states a change of priesthood, it should be clear that "throughout your generations" does not mean any of these things are valid today. "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? **For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.** For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." The Passover feast of the exodus was also said given to Israel "forever" (Exodus 12:14), but the NT says, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). The sacrifice of the Passover lamb of the OT was a shadow of the real thing, the great-

er sacrifice of our Passover, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God (John 1:29). In the same way, the sabbath was a shadow of the greater day, the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, when our Lord arose from the grave victorious over death (Colossians 2:16-17; Revelation 1:10; Mark 16:1-2,9).

CONCLUSION

The nature of truth is such that it can be conclusively that the seventh-day, the sabbath, was a temporary provision given to Israel and that it was replaced by a new and greater day by Jesus Christ. God never changed the sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week; He replaced the sabbath as a day of worship with the greater day of Christ's resurrection from the dead, the first day of the week, our Sunday. In next month's article we will point out in more detail the significance of the first day of the week for Christians.

Editor's Note: Eddy Gilpin was the author of last month's article "Bobby Knight and the Bible." His name was inadvertently omitted. We apologize to brother Gilpin and to you for any problems this may have caused.

CHRIST, THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

By Wesley Hylton
(former Editor, **FCGN**)

We find this statement in Heb. 6:19, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast."

If the hope in Christ was removed, in this age of tension and uncertainty, the world would be plunged into chaos. Christ, and the hope He offers, is the only thing that man can truly count on. All else is uncertain. Our present way of life tends to create insecurity. Hence, everyone is busy trying to find something that will make life richer and more enjoyable.

This search for a better way of life has led many to investigate religion, with surprising results. They found something truly worthwhile. Their previous estimate of religion is reflected in their amazement that Christ has so much to offer. Many, before learning the truth, looked upon

religion as something suited only to children, women, and old men. Thus the richer, fuller life is enjoyed by those fortunate enough to seek and find it.

This hope our Saviour offers is available to all. His plea is, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). He expressed His disappointment in Jn. 5:40, when He said, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life." The following statement further indicates His offer of hope. "I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (Jn. 10:10). No one questions the fact that they were living, physically. However, some might realize they weren't getting out of life all that was available, that they're missing something vital. This something would lift them above mere existence. It would give life meaning and direction. It would answer the age old question, "What am I living for?"

It is truly pathetic to see the number of people who are going through life without hope. They live only for the moment. Circumstances have prevailed which caused them to lose their desire for something better. Unhappy and miserable, they seek to drown their sorrow in alcohol or drugs, only to find themselves enslaved to a monster. These unhappy citizens are found in every community. They cannot adjust to the pace of life. Somewhere along the way they got out of step, and don't have the heart to make a renewed effort to get back on the right road. The look of defeat can be seen in their eyes. It is reflected in their countenance.

Other souls may seek escape in different ways. They are to be found in all circles. They only react differently. They try to escape life by becoming absorbed in work, a career, or some other pursuit. Usually, they are selfish and self-centered, interested only in things that will further their interests. They refuse to look beyond the immediate confines to a better way of life. Alive among the dead is a good way to describe them. They are dead to hope, to Christ and all things that make life more noble.

Life without hope is a dreary prospect. Without it man cannot arise above his animal nature. The

principles of Christianity lift man to his highest peak. His conduct is based on higher ideals, rather than being motivated by selfishness. Man must have a goal in life, otherwise it becomes meaningless. Considering the heartaches and sufferings that are the lot of all, it would be tragic to think of the future as holding nothing better. The very fact that so many get so little out of life plainly indicates why Christ should be preached to all the world.

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Tell them of Christ who died for them, who loves them, and is willing to lead them into paths of glory and honor. Without love every creature is miserable and lonely. Everyone needs to love and be loved. Human love is sometimes fickle, being motivated by selfishness. True love is expressed in giving, rather than receiving. Divine love is a perfect example. God gave His Son. His Son gave His life. Why did they go to such extremes? Because they loved sin-sick, dejected and helpless humanity. They wanted us to have something better. Furthermore, they wanted us to know that when all others had forsaken us we still have a friend. One that loves us unselfishly. One that could be counted on, when needed the most.

To attain the hope that Christ offers we must be "in" Him. If a ship is to avoid the storm, it must find a safe haven. Man's haven is in Christ. By seeking the Kingdom first, man is assured of receiving every temporal blessing needed (Matt. 6:31-34). Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32). To enter our haven of safety, where life is richer and fuller, we must learn the truth. This includes how to enter Christ. Jesus also said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (Jn. 14:15). His commandments include: Faith in Him as the Son of God; repentance, a turning away from sin; confessing His name before men, so that He will confess us before the Father; and being baptized for the remission of sins. Read Hebrews 11:6; Luke 13:3; Matt. 10:32, 33; Acts 2:38. Thus, we arise a new creature "in Christ Jesus," and the wonderful

hope of eternity is ours (Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:27).

Just as the tender young plant must be nourished by the sunshine and rain, the babe in Christ must also be nourished. They are to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2). Proper growth and development depends on soil, climatic conditions, and other varying factors. Spiritual growth depends on environment, companionship, proper attitude, steadfastness, reverence, proper spiritual food and exercise.

To maintain our hope in Christ, we must worship regularly. This includes attending all the services, and not just the ones that may be considered important (Heb. 10:25). The new born Christian is urged to, "set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1). Worship should be approached reverently and sincerely. Regular observance of the Lord's Supper, prayer, singing, giving, and teaching, will provide proper nourishment and strength for the trials that lie ahead. Paul speaks of those who improperly approached the Lord's Supper. He said they were "weak and sickly." They endeavored to mix worldly things with spiritual. Their worship was vain. So will ours be, if we do not approach it with the proper attitude (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23-30).

Our faith in Christ, and our hope for the future, will be severely tried. The arch enemy of all righteousness will do everything he possibly can to turn us from the better way. He will attack at the weakest point, using the cunningly devised weapons that are available to him. He knows our weakest point, and will not fail to work on it. Each time he is successfully resisted makes it easier the next time, (Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8). But don't be deceived into thinking he will quit trying. Be on guard against surprise attacks. He may strike when you least expect it. His offers of worldly happiness are cunningly concealed in a bag of traps.

Our hope is an anchor that will enable us to ride out the storm of temptations, and enjoy the wonderful calm that comes afterward. Remember these words and live by them. "Thy words have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin

against thee" (Psalms 119:11). Our hope in Christ will lead to a better life here on earth, but not only here, for all eternity too. The world's only hope for peace, happiness, and future blessings, lies in Christ. Do you have that hope? If not, why? You can have it!

(FCGN, July 1960)

SEARCH

by Ron Wilson

"Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so." (Acts 17:10-11).

Consider the context of the above noted passage. The apostle Paul was a man empowered by the Holy Spirit to perform miracles in the first century. Paul proved the message he preached was from God by the miracles he performed, yet the Bereans still searched the word of God to see if he was preaching truth.

A great problem today is that people elevate the authority of preachers above the authority of God. Some are more willing to accept the word of a preacher than the word of God. For example a person can be shown Mark 16:16 which states, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." That person will then consult a preacher, and the preacher will actually talk them into disbelieving what the Bible says. All the preacher has to say is, "Well, you can be baptized if you feel so compelled, but it is not necessary," and they will not believe the necessity of baptism as taught by the very Son of God, Jesus Christ.

What does the Bible actually say about one being saved? Many people are referred to John 3:16 when considering the subject of salvation. John 3:16 states, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." It would be absurd to deny what this

passage says. It is certainly in the Bible, and assuredly it teaches the truth. But this is not the only passage in the Bible that pertains to the subject of salvation. John 3:16 does not mention the actual word *saved*, but most will agree that is what is under consideration. Mark 16:16 does mention the word *saved*, but some preachers deny what it teaches and try to use John 3:16 to oppose it. The Bible does not oppose itself. When Jesus said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32), did He have in mind only part of the truth or all of the truth? To get the truth on what the Bible teaches about being saved one needs to search out all that the Bible teaches about being saved.

We need to search the Scriptures. When we search, let us search all of the Scriptures. Let us, like the Bereans, search the Scriptures to determine if a preacher (or anyone else) is preaching what the Bible teaches. If anyone preaches anything different than what the Bible says . . . well, they can't both be correct (cf. Galatians 1:6-9)

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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 18:18; 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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