

# Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Second Class Postage Paid at Mammoth Spring, Ark.

VOLUME 12

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554

January 1979

Number 14

## RECEIVING CHRIST

By Harold Turner

"But to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12, 13)  
"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." (Col. 2: 6, 7)

One of the most urgent messages being preached today is the need to receive Christ as our Saviour. This is a message of most churches. Great efforts are put forth to convince the sinner that he is lost and needs to receive Jesus as his Saviour. But as the sinner listens to this message, as it is presented by the various churches, he may be somewhat puzzled about how to receive Christ. He may be instructed to just kneel down and pray for Jesus to come into his heart, or he may be told to just open up his heart and let Jesus in, or he may be instructed of other things that he must do to receive Christ. In many instances he is assured that something strange and mystical will take place in this experience. And, he is assured that the proof of his having received Christ is his having a wonderful relieved feeling, which is the result of Christ having removed the burden of his sins.

What assurance is there in feelings? What do they prove? Are feelings ever wrong? Feelings are based upon faith in something, whether it is true or false. This fact is illustrated in Gen. 37. When Jacob's sons presented him with Joseph's coat, torn and bloody, "Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth up his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted: and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." Jacob believed with all his heart that Joseph was dead, and this belief caused him to feel great sorrow. His feelings were real because of what he

believed, even though his belief was based upon a story that was not true. Feelings are not the proof of truth, but only of faith in something, whether it is true or false.

How does a person receive Christ as his Saviour? And, can one know for sure that he has received Christ? What if a person has been deceived and misled as to how he is to receive Christ? Jesus said, "And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." (Matt. 15:14) Paul said the Galatians had fallen from grace by receiving a perverted gospel (Gal. 1: 6-7) If one is deceived and misled, he will be lost. But we can know. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) The Bible is filled with warnings about false teachers, and the results of being deceived by them. The Bible is our only safe guide. If we can read it in the Bible we can know that it is true, but if we are instructed in something that we cannot read in the Bible, we had better beware.

What does the Bible teach about our receiving Christ as our Saviour? First, there is no promise of salvation apart from obedience to the Lord's will. In Heb. 5:9 the Bible assures us that Christ is the Saviour of "all them that obey him." In 1 Pet. 1:22, Peter wrote, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth." And in Rom. 6:17, 18, Paul said, "But ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being THEN made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." From these three Scriptures we can be sure that there is something that must be obeyed before one is promised salvation. Salvation is not promised on the basis of faith alone. There is no Scripture that states that one is made free from sin when he believes. The promise of salvation is when we obey. It's true that we are saved by faith, but not until faith leads one to obey. The teaching that all one is required to do is just open up the heart by faith and let

## Seeking to Please Men

By W. L. Totty

In the 22nd chapter of I Kings we have a record of how the king of Israel and the king of Judah conspired to take Ramoth-gilead from the Syrians. The king of Israel had asked Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to help him in this effort. Jehoshaphat was a good king who "did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord." On the other hand, the king of Israel was not good. He had his false prophets in abundance to whom he listened.

Before the day of the battle, Jehoshaphat insisted that they inquire of the prophets as to what the Lord's will was. The king of Israel called up 400 of his false prophets, and every one of them told him that it was the will of the Lord that they take Ramoth-gilead, and that the Lord would deliver it into the hands of the king. Jehoshaphat, however, was not sure the prophets were telling the truth; so, he asked the king of Israel if there were another prophet of whom they could inquire. The king of Israel replied that there was another prophet, a man by the name of Micaiah; but he said, "I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." Nevertheless, the king of Judah insisted that they hear him.

A messenger was sent to call Micaiah; and when he had come to Micaiah, he told him what the other 400 prophets had said, and told Micaiah, "Let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good." Micaiah replied, "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak."

Micaiah told the kings that God was not with them and that they would be defeated if they attempted to take Ramoth-gilead; so, the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?" Micaiah told them that the 400 prophets of Israel were lying, that

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**FULTON COUNTY  
GOSPEL NEWS**

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EDITORS: Erwin Cowen  
and Harold Turner

## Parenthood

By Wilfred A. Peterson

"Of all the commentaries on the Scriptures," wrote John Donne, "good examples are the best."

In practicing the art of parenthood, an ounce of example is worth a ton of preaching.

Our children are watching us live, and what we are shouts louder than anything we say.

When we set an example of honesty, our children will be honest.

When we practice tolerance, they will be tolerant.

When we demonstrate good sportsmanship, they will be good sports.

When we meet life with laughter and a wrinkle in our eye, they will develop a sense of humor.

When we are thankful for life's blessings, they will be thankful.

When we express friendliness, they will be friendly.

When we speak words of praise, they will praise others.

When we confront failure, defeat, and misfortune with a gallant spirit, they will live bravely.

When our lives affirm our faith in the enduring values of life, they will rise above doubt and skepticism.

When we surround them with the love and goodness of God, they will discover life's deeper living.

When we set an example of heroic living, they will be heroes.

Don't just stand there pointing your finger to the heights you want your children to scale, start climbing and they will follow!

## Seeking to Please (Cont.)

they were not speaking the word of the Lord. This provoked one of the prophets to the extent that he "smote Micaiah on the cheek." The king of Israel was also angry and had him put in prison and fed with the bread of affliction and the water of affliction.

When the kings went to battle against the Syrians, they were ignominiously defeated, according to the words which Micaiah had spoken.

The attitude of the king of Israel at this particular time reflected the disposition of the children of Israel at intervals during their entire history. In the 30th chapter of Isaiah the Lord spoke of the children of Israel as being a rebellious people who would not hear the word of the Lord; and he added, "Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits."

The people of today are not too much unlike the king of Israel and his prophets. They like to hear smooth words. It happens even in our day that people who are "at ease in Zion" will become angry at the preachers who dare speak unto them the word of the Lord. Paul said that they would "heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears"; i.e., people with ears eager to hear smooth words that please them and nothing that contradicts their way of living. Smooth words sound good, but they are not always appropriate. We cannot always depend upon sweet platitudes when the peace of the Lord's people is at stake. The man who refuses to tell the truth, because it might sound bitter to some persons, is as guilty as the person who desecrates the church by false teaching.

"Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Meroz assumed a neutral position when the children of Israel were fighting with Sisera. God expects us to declare ourselves on his side. A failure to do so places us on the side of the enemy.

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"Never condemn the judgment of others - you may both be wrong."

"To err is human; to cover it up is too."

## Neglect Will Do It

By W. L. Totty

It has been said that there will be no infidels in hell, meaning, of course, that infidels will have changed their minds at judgment when they realize what their final destination is. There is one thing for sure, however, there will be no one in hell who wants to be there. There are no rational human beings living today who want to go there; but many who do not want to go there and who do not intend to be there, will find themselves there on judgment day. (Matt. 7:21-23)

There are many things that contribute to a person's being lost. The problems that come upon us daily, crowd out our thought of and preparation for the life after this one is over. Neglect is perhaps the greatest hindrance to one's obeying the gospel. People who know the truth neglect to obey it day after day, thinking that they will do so at some future time; but various things, whether great or small, keep cropping up that harden our hearts little by little and push it farther and farther into the future until finally the life has ebbed out of the body and left the soul in a lost condition. The apostle Paul asked, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3)

God has made it just as easy for one to go to heaven as anyone could reasonably expect it to be. He paid the supreme price by giving his Son to die that all humanity might be saved. Jesus went to the cross and suffered the terrible pains inflicted upon him in order that we might be saved, demonstrating to the world that he and the Father were extremely interested in the redemption of the human race. His plan is very simple. It is not a complex arrangement which is difficult to be understood and which requires a great deal of research work in order to determine the conditions to be met; but his plan for man's redemption is stated in simple, concise language which would need help NOT to be understood.

Hell is a terrible place and eternity is a long time. It would be a thing of unimaginable misery to stand on a red-hot iron throughout eternity; and, of course, that is nothing to be compared with being plunged bodily into hell for an endless eternity. Therefore, we say that there will be nobody there who wants to be there. And there will be nobody there who would stay there if he could but have a second chance then.

Today is the day to put neglect behind us. As the apostle Paul said, quoting the prophet Isaiah, "... behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2)

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"It is a lot easier to grow old than it is to grow up."

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"The exercise of sympathy enlarges the affections of the heart."

# THE RIGHTEOUS

By Owen D. Olbricht

"And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:18) "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." (1 Peter 3:12) "But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10:35)

If the Lord is on the side of the righteous, then there are some important questions that must be answered.

(1) Why do the righteous suffer from the wicked? At least two reasons can be given: (a) The wicked do wicked things. Ahab killed righteous Naboth (2 Kings 21:1-14). Herod took the life of James (Acts 12: 1, 2), and Stephen was stoned for preaching the truth (Acts 7:51-60). (b) The good of the righteous reproves the wicked which causes some wicked people to seek to harm the righteous. For this reason Cain killed Abel (1 John 3:12).

(2) Why do the wicked revile the righteous? The wicked seek to justify their own lives by seeking to hurt the righteous by abusive words. Reviling the righteous calls attention away from their own evil lives. Also by so abusing the righteous they seek to turn the righteous away from their godly lives.

(3) Why do the righteous have problems? People are unwilling to accept the righteous as genuine. I once worked in a cannery. A young man there told me that people only did good because they expected to be benefited by doing so. Many look for ulterior motives in the lives of godly people. Much harm is done to righteous people by suspicious people attributing evil motives to the deeds of the righteous.

(4) Why do the righteous have as many or more problems than do the wicked? The righteous do not harm the wicked but the wicked harm the righteous which means that the righteous have more potential for harm than do the wicked.

(a) The righteous have troubles simply because they are going against the main stream of mankind (Matt. 7:12, 14). Living a righteous life means one will suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12).

(b) All are in the world and for this reason receive the blessings and

difficulties created by nature (Matt. 5:45).

(c) God uses problems for the good of the righteous (Rom. 8:28).

(d) God uses correction for those who are His children (Heb. 12:4-11).

(e) Problems are the lot of all mankind. Only by being out of this world will one be free from problems.

(5) Can difficulties benefit the righteous? The righteous can be helped by trying situations in life if they will accept such as a help to them (Heb. 12:11).

(6) How are Christians to view the trials of life? Is their outlook to be different from that of the non-Christian?

(a) They are to rejoice when trials arise, knowing that such can improve their lives (James 1:2, 3; Romans 5: 3, 4).

(b) They should look for the blessing that can come from such trials (Hebrews 12:11).

(c) They should realize that God, as a good Father, is working in their lives for their good (Hebrews 12:7; Romans 8:28).

(d) They should understand that such are not pleasant to endure but that if they endure them they will be benefited (Heb. 12:2, 11).

(e) They must not turn bitter and seek to hurt those who create the problems. Rather they are to seek their good, as did Paul and Jesus (Acts 21:31-39; Rom. 15:3), and forgive, as did Jesus and Stephen (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60).

(f) They must accept the fact that living a righteous life does not mean that they will be free from troubles and persecution (2 Tim. 3:12), that it is through much tribulation they will enter the kingdom of heaven (Acts 14:22).

(g) They are to build on the assurance that no amount of tribulation can separate them from the love of God (Rom. 8:35-39).

(h) They should understand that troubles can cause them to understand troubles so that they can help those in difficulties (2 Cor. 1:4).

(i) They are to know that the wicked will be punished by God; therefore, they do not need to avenge themselves (Rom.

12:19; 2 Thess. 1: 6-9).

Yes, the righteous will have their troubles just as will the wicked, but in spite of this the way of the righteous is much easier than is the way of the wicked (Prov. 13:15), for the righteous have the assurance that in this life his troubles can be meaningful to him and that in the life to come he will not have any more troubles but will live eternally in a place that is free from the problems of this life (Rev. 21:4). The wicked do not have this promise.

I would rather endure the problems of the righteous than suffer the problems of the wicked for I have the assurance that my problems are beneficial and purposefully controlled by a loving God (1 Cor. 10:13).

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

### Churches of Christ:

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Omer Weaver . . . . .	5.00
Clyde & Delphia Smith . . . . .	5.00
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Clarence Price . . . . .	2.00

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"If you keep your tongue, it will improve."

"Encouragement is like a premium gasoline - it helps to take the knocks out of living."

"Life is a one way street, and we are not coming back."

"Life's greatest tragedy is to lose God and never miss him."

"The best way to appreciate your job is to imagine being without it."

"Never judge a man by his relatives - he did not choose them."

RECEIVING CHRIST (Cont.)

# What Will You Do with the Bible?

By Ordell Heavin

Jesus come in, is not derived from the Scriptures. This false teaching is of man, not God.

What does God require of us for salvation? Just before Jesus ascended back into heaven, he gave the apostles the following instructions, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. (Mark 16:15, 16) Notice that this gospel was for "every creature" in "all the world." Now, who of these is promised salvation? "He that believeth and is baptized." The book of Acts gives the history of these men carrying out this commission. In Acts 2 this message is first preached, and three thousand obeyed it. As they listened to it they were pricked in their heart, and asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter, speaking as the Spirit gave him utterance (Acts 2:4), instructed them to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." In every example of conversion in the book of Acts, the commission of Jesus, as given in Mark 16:15, 16, is clearly seen. The people heard the preaching of the gospel, they believed it and were baptized. In Romans 6:3, and Galatians 3:27, Paul stated that baptism puts one "Into Christ." No one can receive Christ as his Saviour until he has obeyed the gospel.

There is nothing strange and mystical, something that is better felt than understood, in receiving Christ. We must learn from the Bible what he requires of us, and then do it, and then we can have the assurance of our salvation. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Don't be deceived into accepting something that you can't read for yourself in the word of God.

"Measure your fellow man by his excellencies, not by his shortcomings."

"Give your brother credit for being a good man unless you know that he is not."

"We frequently concern ourselves with the speaker's ability to deliver. Should we not be more deeply concerned with our capacity to receive?"

God has been so good, and so gracious in revealing his will to us. We have the opportunity to study, learn, and pattern our lives by its divine precepts. In Jer. 8:9 we read of men who could have been wise, but who actually became foolish because they would not accept the message of God. To read God's word with doubts or with scorn is a very serious matter. In Acts 13:46 Paul spoke of some who had put the word of God from them, and in so doing, Paul said they were judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life.

In Acts 17:11 Luke commended those of Berea, saying, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." It's hard to find men today who have such interest in the truth. Far too many are like those described in Acts 28:27 - "For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and should be converted, and I should heal them."

Today we need men who will follow Paul's admonition to Timothy, when he said, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Tim. 4:2) Paul states the reason for this urgent appeal in the following verses, saying, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Men today need to learn the truths of God's word and store them in their heart and mind.

In Psalm 119 David listed several things that one ought to do with the word of God. For one thing, he said that God's word should be hidden in the heart of man so that he would not sin against God. Jesus shows in Matt. 4:1-10 that God's word is the instrument with which we can defeat Satan. He defeated each temptation with "It is written." We should be able to do the same today. The apostle Peter wrote, saying, "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 Peter 3:15) There are several things required before one is able to do this, but basically Paul's statement in 2 Tim. 2:15 is required, "Study to show thyself

approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Jesus also taught this principle in Matt. 4:4 when he said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Through diligent study and daily living by the word, we are equipping ourselves to overcome the temptations of Satan.

A second thing that David advises regarding God's word is that one stand in "awe of thy word." (Psalm 119:161) We are to serve God with reverence and godly fear (Heb. 12:28). The Bible is from God, and must be treated with the greatest of respect. When men began to pervert it (Gal. 1:7), and wrest it (2 Peter 3:16), they are only bringing about their own destruction. We must believe that God has said what he meant, and meant what he said, and that he has said it with such clarity that all can understand it.

A third thing that we should do with the word is to preach it boldly. Loving and learning the word demands that we share it with the lost. The world needs this message more than any other thing. It is our responsibility to teach others the truth, and thereby lead them to the Saviour. But, we must preach the word, and the word only, for God has never permitted men to preach their interpretations of what they think God meant to say (2 Peter 1:20-21).

What will you do with the Bible? Do you diligently study it? Are you living by it? Do you treat it with the greatest respect? Are you sharing it with your friends and neighbors? Have you obeyed the things God requires of all to be saved? The manner in which we treat the Bible, is the manner in which we treat the Lord, for the Bible is His word.

