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## *Go Ye into All the World*

By Clovis Ragsdale

In Luke 19:10 Jesus said that he came to seek and to save that which was lost. This was made possible through his personal ministry and death on the cross. Before Jesus left this earth he told the apostles to go and teach the gospel to all nations. The apostles were to train those who obeyed the gospel to continue teaching the gospel to each succeeding generation. This was God's plan for the propagation of his church for all time.

In Matt 28:18-20 Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

First, notice that Jesus said that all power had been given unto him. By whom? God, of course. His power was to encompass heaven and earth. Everything that he taught was the will of God.

Next we notice that his instructions were to go, to teach, to baptize, and to further teach. They were to teach all nations. Sometimes we stand in awe at the success of the church of the first century. The gospel was preached to all of the then known world, which consisted of Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and part of Asia. They were able to accomplish this mission without the aid of our modern transportation and communication. The secret of their success was evidently their zeal, their unity of purpose and doctrine, and a deep sense of urgency and determination. Too, they had confidence that Jesus would be with them as he had promised.

During the past century we have been occupied with restoring the patterns that were given to the apostles during the first century. We have established a base, here in the United States, with possibly more than three million people who are

dedicated to following the patterns of the New Testament, and determined to live and do the will of God as outlined by Christ and the inspired apostles. Having established a base, we are now obligated to preach the gospel to all the world. This is a great responsibility. Many congregations are applying themselves to this task with zeal and determination. Daily radio programs and weekly TV programs help to keep the truth before the American people, who for the most part are engrossed in so many other things that they are not receptive to spiritual truths.

But what about the rest of the world? About four billion people in the world are left without the truth, having no chance to know Christ and his saving power. Many congregations are committing the sin of omission by failing to work toward preaching the gospel to the whole world. We have the commission to "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The early church sent Paul and others time and time again to distant lands. We have the same obligation today. But though there are so many more people in our world, we have better methods to reach the distant lands of the world - radio, the printed page, and rapid transportation to most parts of the world.

As a result of the many congregations who have met the challenge, thousands are being added to the Lord's church. Much credit can be given to our Christian schools who are training our young men to go and do this difficult work. However, we have only scratched the surface in carrying out the great commission.

Fifty years ago the area now covered by the Fulton County Gospel News was mission territory. This writer can remember when there were no congregations in Mammoth Spring and Thayer, and when the church in West Plains numbered only a few dozen. Having witnessed the growth of the church in this area, one can realize what can be accomplished by zeal and

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## *The Poor In Spirit*

By Terry Frizzell

In Matt. 5:3, we read, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." By the poor in spirit, Jesus meant those who are sensible of spiritual destitution.

Paul said, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12) The poor in spirit recognize this fact and long for a better state of life. Paul then tells us, "by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." (Rom. 5:18) The poor in spirit long for the justification of life that can only be found in Christ.

The kingdom of heaven (the church) is theirs because they are the class who seek it. In Matt. 6:33 Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." This is their goal in life, to find the church that Christ died for on the cross of Calvary. But more than just to find the church, they seek "his righteousness."

Paul speaking of Israel, said, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." (Rom. 10:3) This is not the attitude of the poor in spirit. But what is the righteousness of God that Paul is speaking of? In verse eight he says that it is "the word of faith, which we preach." Therefore to seek the righteousness of God is to do his will.

The poor in spirit are as the merchant who was seeking goodly pearls (Matt. 13:45-46). When he found one pearl of great price, he sold all he had and bought it. This demonstrates more than just a half hearted effort but doing all within one's power to obtain that which he desires. In like manner, the poor in spirit do all within their power to be in obedience to the word of God.

When these people are once within the kingdom, they abide in it. They do not just

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GOSPEL NEWS**

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and Harold Turner

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## Believing in God

By Lavern Stewart

The desire to worship is universal, and even though the objects and forms differ widely, the fact still exists that somewhere, sometime, in some way man acquired the idea of God and the desire to worship him. Since it is true that man could not originate such a sublime idea, God made himself known. Romans one shows that even though the knowledge of God was corrupted, it had once been pure. It is a matter of history that man started out with the knowledge of one God and have gone from one to many gods. Unbelievers argue to the contrary, that the first conception of divinity was many gods, but the Bible shows that God made himself known to the first man.

Just as men could not originate the idea of God, neither could men form such a moral code as exists among civilized men. From the actions of man, we know that he not only could not, but he would not originate such a high standard of dealing with his fellows. Man is too selfish to suggest to all others that we love our neighbors as we do ourselves. The Great One who made the universe made moral laws to regulate mankind.

Of all reasons for believing in God, the one concerning "cause and effect" is the most convincing. We know that we are here; too, we did not make ourselves, neither the world about us. Something or someone surely did. I believe it must have been an intelligent and purposeful Designer because we see intelligent design in the things made. If one views the order, design, beauty, and function of nature, he must believe in Almighty God.

# The Judgment Day

By Ernest Loomis

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9:27) "God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world." (Acts 17:31.) "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." (2 Cor. 5:10.) "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing." (Eccl. 12:14.) Can anyone doubt that there is a day coming when all will be judged? At that time will we regret our lack of concern and poor decisions about spiritual things, or will we rejoice in our good judgments? The preparation made in this life will determine our eternal destiny. What kind of day will the judgment disclose for us?

Judgment will be a day of reckoning. Will it be a day of reward or a day of regret and remorse? Will we see, as did Belshazzar (Dan. 5), the handwriting on the wall proclaiming our doom? Will we, like Israel, reap the whirlwind after sowing the wind of indifference, unconcern, disobedience, and just plain refusing to obey all of God's commands? Or, will we reap the joy of salvation because we have fully obeyed the gospel of Christ, which is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16), and continued to abide in the Lord's teaching (2 John 9)?

Judgment will be a day of rest for the faithful Christian because John was instructed to write, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Rev. 14:13.) This rest is limited to those who die IN the Lord, and to die in the Lord requires that one live in him. The people of God are assured of this rest (Heb. 4:9-11), and Paul declares that the faithful Christian can be certain of "A building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. 5:1.)

The day of judgment will be a day of revelation. "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil." (Eccl. 12:14.) Paul spoke of "The day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." (Rom. 2:16.) The hypocrisies, insincerities, and those "little" sins we think are well hidden, will be exposed; for Jesus reminds us that NOTHING is secret that shall not be made manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known." (Luke 8:17.) What a shocking and terrifying day that will be for the honest, sincere, morally good people who

have lived good lives and have done much good, but who have depended upon what they thought was right, or what they felt was right, or what some uninspired man had taught them was right. Listen to Jesus, "Not everyone 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." (Matt. 7:21-23.)

Surely we know that we should do all of God's will. James declares that our failure to do all things we know to be right will haunt us. He said, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17.) Are you doing all that God requires, and thus preparing for that day the Lord has appointed to judge the world? To be only partly prepared is no better than not preparing at all. The five foolish virgins (Matt. 25: 1-13) made some preparations but not enough, and they were left outside knocking, pleading and begging for the door to be opened, but they were told, "I know ye not."

Friend, don't come up short in that day and find the door to eternal life closed because you have followed the teachings of uninspired men, or your own feelings, or are only partly prepared. Believe and obey those inspired men who wrote God's word. It does make a difference what you believe and do.

"When God sends a man to the lion's den, He goes there with him."

"He who is on the road to heaven will not be content to go there alone."

"Faith has three elements-knowledge, assent, and appropriation."

"While ten men wait for something to turn up, one man turns something up."

"It is better to think a good thought about a bad man than to think an evil thought about a good man."

# IS IT A SIN?

By Harold Turner

"Is it a sin?" is a question that has been asked about many things. Certainly this question is appropriate, and should be asked about things we do in life and service to God. But how we determine the answer to this is what is significant. It is possible to determine the answer by how we personally feel about the matter. But is this the correct way to deal with such questions? It isn't uncommon, when discussing some questionable issue, to hear someone express, "Well, I don't see anything wrong with it." This is a method that many use to solve questionable things. If they don't see anything wrong with something, then this makes it right as far as they are concerned. What this type of reasoning amounts to is that we will decide within ourselves what is right and wrong.

There is a grave danger involved when we try to determine right and wrong by the way we feel. God warns us, "There is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 14:12) What seems right, or how I feel about some matter, may not be right at all. In fact, this passage suggests that what I may consider right, may in reality be wrong. We do not have the ability within us to determine right and wrong. Jeremiah wrote, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23) We must have a different method of determining matters of right and wrong other than ourselves.

Let's look at this question in a way that is frequently used. Is it a sin to use music with our singing in worship to God? Most of us like and appreciate the sound of an instrument, especially when it is played well. But, does this mean that because most of us like such music that God will accept it? How should we determine the answer to this question? Is it reasonable to assume that because we like something, God will also like it? God has said, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." (Isa. 55:8) There is no way that man, within himself, can determine what God does or does not like. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us..." (Deut. 29:29) We can know only to the extent that God has revealed what does and does not please him.

There are several principles to keep in mind as we discuss questionable matters. The Bible states, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (1 Thess. 5:21) But, what standard are we going to use to prove all things? We are warned, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth

not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God..." (2 John 9) To transgress is to go beyond. We are limited in all religious practices to the doctrine of Christ. Too, we are warned, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." (Deut. 4:2, see also Rev. 22:18-19) The only standard that we can safely use to determine matters of right and wrong is the word of God. Can you prove by the word of God that He is pleased with the use of instrumental music in worship? This question is usually dodged and evaded by the reply, "Can you prove that he is displeased with the use of an instrument in worship?" Asking this question seems to solve the problem for those using the instrument. But, have they proved anything? The burden of proving a matter does not lie solely upon those who do not do something, but also upon those who do practice certain things. We must prove all things. If we use an instrument, we must prove that it is acceptable to God.

But why do we feel that the use of an instrument of music in worship is wrong? There are several Bible reasons for believing this, but primarily because the doctrine of Christ doesn't mention their use in worship. Look at 2 John 9 again, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." Every practice of service to God must be supported by the doctrine of Christ. We are not privileged to do anything the Bible doesn't specifically condemn. To use an instrument, we must find the support for it in the doctrine of Christ, otherwise we are transgressing, or going beyond the authority of Christ, and to do so is to cut ourselves off from God. In Matt. 28:18 Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." If he has all authority, and did not authorize instruments of music in worship, who did authorize them? Too, in Col. 3:17 the Bible states, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus..." Unless Jesus authorized a practice, it cannot be done in his name. Jesus did not authorize the use of instruments, in whose name are they used?

Jesus promised the apostles, "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit, of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." (John 16:13) The Spirit delivered to the apostles "All truth." This is supported further in Acts 1:2, which shows that after Jesus was taken up, "he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles

whom he had chosen." In Acts 20:27 the apostle Paul stated, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." These passages show that the apostles received all truth, the whole counsel of God, by the Spirit, and they delivered this to the church. In Eph. 3:1-5 Paul said that what had been revealed to him, he had written, and when we read it, we can know what was revealed to him. But, none of the apostles mentioned the use of instrumental music in worship to God. Yet, they received the whole counsel of God, all truth. We are commanded that we must worship God in "truth" (John 4:24). We cannot use an instrument in truth, because truth does not mention them.

We are also to worship God by faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please him..." (Heb. 11:6) "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17) "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Rom. 14:23) These passages show that to please God we must serve him by faith. To act by faith is to act by the word of God. To act without faith, or to act without the word of God, is sin. We cannot use an instrument by faith, because they are not mentioned in the word of faith. Paul preached the faith (Gal. 1:23), the people heard the faith (Gal. 3:2), but they heard nothing preached about the use of instruments. Therefore, they cannot be used by faith, unless it can be shown that the gospel supports their use.

Instruments are not authorized by Christ, they are not found within his doctrine, the apostles, who were guided into all truth, did not mention their use, they cannot be used in faith, therefore, we do not use them. Now, if you do use them, why do you? By whose authority do you use them? Is it on the basis that the gospel does not specifically state that we are not to use them? Certainly God's word teaches us not to use them. We are commanded not to add to his word or to take from it. We are commanded to abide only within the doctrine of Christ. When you add to God's word you disobey him, isn't this sin? It is sin when we go beyond the authority of Christ.

We must use great care to prove all things by the authority of the doctrine of Christ. It is not in man to know what pleases God. He has revealed all things that he wants us to do. Let's learn to respect his will. We are to walk by faith, but we can do this only as long as we walk in harmony with his word. We urge you to use only God's word as the guide for your life. In the latter part of 2 John 9, he wrote, "He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." This is what we all want, isn't it?

# Abstain From All Works Of The Flesh

By W. L. Totty

The young are extremely vulnerable and enticed to do that which is popular among their age group. The don't want to be known as a "stick-in-the-mud" or a "wallflower." They desire to be popular. But they must be taught that there are some things of greater value than popularity and being "the life of the party." It is not that we would discourage good, clean companionship with our peers, but there are some things to which we are going to have to say, "No," as we go through this life. Christians must be a peculiar people (1 Peter 2:9). We need to learn these things as a youth; we need to keep them in our minds in maturity. We cannot be straddling the fence, first on the side of Satan and then on the Lord's side, if we want to be accounted worthy of being called a Christian.

It is the accepted thing in the eyes of society, and in the eyes of many church members as well, that a young person must go to the school dances as he grows up in order to be accepted socially and to develop a well-rounded personality. Many a mother has encouraged her daughter to do this very thing. In defense of the practice, some say, "Show me where dancing is condemned in the New Testament."

In Galatians 5:19-21 we have the works of the flesh mentioned. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Notice the word "lasciviousness." The definition of the word lascivious in Webster's dictionary is, "1. Wanton; lewd; lustful. 2. Tending to produce voluptuous or lewd emotions." One would have to logically say that the modern dance, with the vulgar bodily movements, would be described as lascivious. One could hardly turn on a television set these days without glimpsing such vulgarity. Even to avidly watch the bodily gyrations would certainly tend to produce lustful thoughts; and certainly, to participate in the embrace of, or in close contact with another of the opposite sex, would cause one to have impure thoughts.

Another act classed as a work of the flesh is "revellings." This is defined as riotous and noisy festivity or entertainment provided, as dances; carousing, etc. A Christian must disassociate himself from this kind of party or gathering. One who is a party to such, the Bible says, "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." It

also says that "if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Rom. 8:13) That is, of course, referring to a spiritual death and a spiritual life.

There are those who seem to think that there is no enjoyment to be had in life if one does not carouse with the drunken and indulge in every sort of sinful activity. They walk after the flesh themselves and blatantly advocate that others follow in their footsteps. But there are others who think that they can occasionally indulge in the works of the flesh and still be Christians. But the apostle Paul said, "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." (Gal. 6:8)

Boys and girls, men and women, don't be enticed to indulge in those things which are sinful regardless of whether or not you will be thought popular. This life is merely a preparatory state for the life hereafter. Stay away from the evil when it appears. It takes courage to be different, but the end results will be life eternal with God, whereas to go along with the crowd will plunge your soul into the abyss of hell with all the revellers, drunkards, murders, adulterers, etc. You would not want to be judged as a murderer, would you? But a murderer will not be punished with more severity than a licentious, lascivious person!

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"Why is it that we credit ourselves with our success and blame God with our failures."

## Go Ye Into All The World (Cont.)

hard work. We have the promise that if we send forth God's word it will not return unto him void (Isa. 55:11). Our numbers have grown from a few hundred to many thousands. Our numbers contain many young people who are talented to teach and serve the Lord in many ways. If we hold fast to the truth and work together in unity, we can expect to see the church make even great gains.

The time has now come for the church in this area to look beyond the horizons. Some congregations are now able to spend as much on mission work as they do on their local work. Several congregations are able to help on a smaller scale. The potential for much greater growth exists. May God help us to realize our obligations and help us to put forth the necessary efforts to achieve the saving of souls.

## The Poor In Spirit (Cont.)

buy the pearl of great price and then sit it aside and forget about it. They protect it so that no one will be able to take it away from them. The poor in spirit are present when the saints meet for worship or the study of God's word. They grow and become strong in their service to God. Each day they strive to be a better person in this life for the cause of Christ.

Are you one of the poor in spirit? Do you recognize the spiritual state of man, and especially your own? Would you give all that you have for Christ and his kingdom? If Christ did allow you to be counted among his saints, would you do all you could to guard against being taken away from his presence? Are you following what someone has told you is right, or are you seeking the kingdom and the righteousness of God?