

# Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Publication No. 211780

Second Class Postage Paid at Mammoth Spring, AR

Volume 23

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

March 1989

No. 3

## Has God Asked Too Much?

By Ernest Loomis

When Solomon died his son, Rehoboam, began to reign as king over Israel but because of a heavy hand of oppression ten of the twelve tribes rebelled against him and made Jeroboam their king. All men of Israel were to return to Jerusalem three times each year for certain feasts and Jeroboam reasoned that if they continued to do so their hearts would be turned back to Jerusalem and Rehoboam so he made two calves of gold and placed one in Bethel and one in Dan and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." (1 Kings 12:28). Jeroboam thought to streamline their religion and make it more convenient the people would continue to follow him. Does this have a familiar ring to it? How many religions today are built largely upon "convenience" instead of "conviction"? A way of convenience or conviction, which? Jeroboam was interested in providing convenience rather than conviction in the people. God said, go to Jerusalem to worship. Jeroboam said, God is just asking too much; but who was he to change God's arrangement, laws or commandment? And what man has that right today? Paul said, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? (Rom. 9:20). If religion by convenience rather than conviction was wrong then, is it not wrong today? Do we not have a lot of "Jeroboams" in religious leadership today?

Has God ask too much in asking that we walk by faith? Most people seemingly are not satisfied unless they can "see" something or "feel" something but Paul said, "We walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). And that "Faith comes by hearing the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). As we study the various examples of conversion recorded in Acts we find it was what people "heard" that brought them to obedience. For example: In (Acts 2:37) it was when the people "heard" the preach-

ing of the apostles that they were pricked in their hearts. Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian and when he "heard" Philip's preaching he said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:35-39). Cornelius was told to send to Joppa for Simon Peter who would "tell him words" whereby he and his house might be saved (Acts 11:13-14). "Many of the Corinthians hearing (Paul's preaching) believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8).

Is God asking too much when He asks us to repent of all our sins? He said "Repent or perish" (Luke 13:3, 5). Through Paul He "Commanded all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). God has given us the meaning of repentance, the means of repenting, the opportunity, inducement and promise of forgiveness, but the repenting is up to us.

Has God asked too much in asking the penitent believer to be baptized in order to be saved? Please read, (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; Acts 10:48; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3-6; Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:21).

Does God ask too much when He asks us to worship and serve him according to "his will" and not ours? (Matt. 15:9; Acts 17:23; John 4:24). Does he ask too much by asking our complete obedience? (Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:8-9; Rev. 22:14). Surely in view of what God has done for us by providing the necessities and luxuries of life, and much more, salvation through Christ, we could not say that God is asking too much of us.

Be sure your faith is based on what God says and not man, for IT DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHAT YOU BELIEVE!!!

P.O. Box 452  
Seymour, MO 65746

\*\*\*\*\*

## Good-Bye To Our Country

By Bill Graddy

Because the people of Sodom and Gomorrah did not listen to God, they were forced to say good-bye to their cities (Genesis 19:24-25). The children of Israel had to say good-bye to Jerusalem as they entered Assyrian and Babylonian captivities (Jeremiah 24:5; 25:11, 12; Ezekiel 12:8-16). Some returned from this punishment only to say a final farewell to the city as Jesus beheld it and wept (Matthew 23:37-38; 24).

As God raised up men of old to discipline His children, so He may now be in the process of raising up a foreign enemy to discipline America. No, I am not a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but read on. "Last year, Japanese interest purchased almost \$680 billion in American securities, and now, they own more than \$40 billion worth of U.S. real estate. And, because they finance one-third of the U.S. debt, we will pay them approximately \$58 billion in interest this year."

"The Japanese now own approximately 25 percent of commercial office buildings in downtown Los Angeles and have significant holdings in Honolulu, San Francisco and New York. This is not to criticize the Japanese, but rather to point out that it does not speak well for a nation as big and as strong as the U.S." With a continuation of such holdings, how long will it be before the Japanese control us?

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). Therefore, Americans and members of the church need to awaken to parallel times of old and observe the actions of God against unrighteousness (Ephesians 5:14-17).

Let us not say Good-Bye To Our Country. America is too young to die. The preaching and the practicing of the Gospel of Christ is the only way we and our grandchildren will escape the inevitable of saying Good-Bye To Our Country.

**FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS**

. . . is a monthly publication distributed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name be SURE to include the ZIP CODE. It must be with each address according to the Postal regulations. This paper is supported by unsolicited contributions for which we are grateful. If you care to know the financial status and expenses, that information will be furnished upon request. Mail all address corrections to:

**FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS**  
P. O. Box 251  
Mammoth Spring, AR 72554  
EDITOR . . . . . Clovis Ragsdale  
Publication No. 211780

## What God Could Have Done, And What God Did

By Eddy Gilpin

Many individuals enter into a study of the Bible with the idea that it cannot be understood by all alike. Since, according to this thought, that is the case, it does not really matter what one obtains from the Bible or how he "interprets" it. All that matters is that he obtain something and that he does interpret it somehow. Such a thought is repugnant to God's justice, discrediting to his inspired word, damning to one's soul and further fuel for the fires of infidelity. Not only can the Bible say the same thing to all, but it must do so in order for it to be God's word (I Cor. 14:33). Not only can it be seen by all alike, but it must be; or else it misinterpreted. The ideas of "agreeing to disagree" and "I'm O.K., you're O.K." as far as spiritual matters are concerned are masquerades of Satan that have originated in the halls of Hell.

One idea that contributes greatly to much misunderstanding is the thought that says, "This is what God can do; therefore, this is what God does." When this supposition is seen in the light of Bible teaching, the fallacy of it becomes clear. Several prevailing schools of thought in the religious world rest upon this invalid notion.

The dogma of Universalism has its foundation in this very proposition. The prevailing thought that God is too loving and too kind to allow anyone to be lost is the emotional appeal of this infidelic system. The reasoning behind it is that God is powerful enough to save all, that he

loves everyone, and that he would not have any to be lost. All of these, of course, are true. Thus, the reasoning is that since God possesses the power to do this that this is what he will actually do. When one allows emotion and desire to overcome reason and truth, he can so deceive himself into thinking this to be true. While it is true that God could have created man with the absence of "his (God's) own image" (Gen. 1:27), that he had the power to deny man the freedom of choice (Josh. 24:15), that he possessed the wherewithal to make man a "robotic" being that could do naught but the will of God, the question is not "what *could* God have done?", but "What did God actually do?" God has the power to create this world anew and destroy it a thousand times over. But, he is not doing so. Although God possessed the power to pronounce Universalism as a fact, the Bible reveals that he did not do so (Mt. 7:21-23).

The precept of Unconditional Election is another plant with its roots seated in this idea. The proponents of this obedience-denying, Bible-rejecting doctrine have thus "reasoned" that since God has the power to save unconditionally this must then be what he did. The fallacy of such thinking is again evident. Truly, God possessed the awesome power to pronounce salvation to whomever he desired and by whatever means he desired. However, the question is not what God could have done, but rather what God actually did. Such passages as Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38 and Hebrews 5:8,9 reveal the decision he rendered. The Lord made faithful obedience a prerequisite to the joys of the heavenly abode. Neither by this nor any other idea can man misalign and negate this Biblical truth.

The tenet of "Once saved, always saved" also springs from the thought currently under consideration. Numerous are the times when denominationalists in debate have charged the members of the body of Christ with denying God's power by insinuating that if one falls it is the fault of God. But, notice again, that the question is not one of God's ability, but of his choice. Of course God possessed the power to pronounce that once an individual is "saved" he would never fall away. Just as in creation, God could have denied man free moral agency upon his becoming a Christian. He could have taken "the image of God" (which allows for choice) away from him at that point. However, what he had the power to do is not what he actually did. He left man with the same freedom of choice after conversion that he had before conversion. Therefore, man can choose to abandon God and turn back to the world (Mt. 13:22; II Pet. 2:20-22; I Tim. 1:19,20).

Further, the precept of "faith only" has its basis in this idea. Since a few passages mention faith as being essential to the salvation of one's soul, many suppose that since God had the ability to pronounce salvation at the point of faith alone without any further acts of obedience, that this is exactly what he did. Once again, however, the question is one of action instead of ability. Even though God had the ability to establish the system of "faith only", he did not exercise that power (Jas. 2:14-26). Rather, he chose to base man's salvation upon obedience to his word (Heb. 5:8,9). What he actually did was much different from what he could have done.

Many more are the insidious doctrines of man that spring from such a thought as this. The power of God is truly an awesome thing. No man can limit that power. However, God has the ability to limit his own power. Whenever he does so, man must adhere to the limitations thus imposed by God and restrain emotion and desire from overcoming truth and reason. The only means of knowing the will of God is, of course, through his revealed word. When it alone is considered without preconceived ideas, unrestrained emotional appeal and selfish desires, not only can one know much about what God had the power to do, but also what God has actually done. Thus, one can understand and obey that which God has commanded. Not only can **one** do it, but **all** can and must if they are to be pleasing to him.

378 Ocoola Cr. Tansi  
Crossville, TN 38555



## Neglecting The Bible

By Burl Curtis

On national television quiz shows the simplest Bible questions are usually missed. Many are neglecting and forgetting the Bible. Are members of the Lord's church being influenced? Each person needs to be aware of the terrible consequences resulting from neglecting to learn and remember the teachings of God.

For a nation the consequences are horrible. David wrote, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." (Ps. 9:7). Some nations, including our own, are forgetting God while others have never learned. Since God cannot lie (Tit. 1:2), we can be sure these nations will be turned into hell unless they repent. The church of Christ must make every effort to teach all those who do not

know by personal contact, radio, television, Bible studies, the printed page, and by all other good means.

Being ignorant of God's righteousness caused the Israelites to establish their own. Righteousness is that which is right and just. Paul wanted his nation to be saved. (Rom. 10:1-3) He recognized their zeal for God but it was not according to knowledge. He stated clearly the results of this ignorance, "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." Is this not exactly what is happening to many today? They do not know what is right and have neglected to learn so they do what they feel and believe is right. They have developed their own set of rules for what is right and wrong. They are failing miserably but they will not know, unless they are taught, until it is too late in the day of judgment. (See Acts 8:30, 31 and Matt. 7:21-23.) They never knew or failed to heed the warning of Jeremiah, "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.)

There is no escape for those who neglect the Bible. The writer of the book of Hebrews raised the question but did not answer it because he had already done so. He wrote, "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?" (Heb. 2:3.) He did not give an answer because he had already said, "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." Many are not only failing to give "the more earnest heed," they are giving little or no heed. They continue to let them slip. God requires all such to repent. "In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30 NIV.) In some places, enough Bible has been preached to save everyone if all would pay careful attention and would not drift.

The seriousness of neglecting and forgetting the Bible is plainly set forth in Psalm 50. The wicked "hated instruction" and cast God's words behind them. They gave their mouths to evil and their tongues framed deceit. They sat and spoke against their brothers and slandered their own mother's son. God said because he kept silence they thought he was like them. But God answered that he would rebuke them and lay the charge before them. He warn, "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." (v.22.)

Could you be encouraged to cease being a forgetful hearer and become a doer of the work and you will be blessed in your deed? (Jas. 1:25.) Please do not take the present silence of God to mean that you have gotten by and that you will not have to give an account unto him. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom. 14:12.)

CONTRIBUTIONS

CHURCHES

Jeff Church of Christ . . . . .	\$10.00
(Thayer, MO)	
Hatfield Church of Christ . . . . .	25.00
(Koshkonong, MO)	
Garfield Church of Christ . . . . .	25.00
(Garfield, AR)	
Agnos Church of Christ . . . . .	15.00
(Agnos, AR)	
Elizabeth Church of Christ . . . . .	15.00
(Elizabeth, AR)	
Sitka Church of Christ . . . . .	20.00
(Williford, AR)	
Dellhalf Church of Christ . . . . .	20.00
(Myrtle, MO)	
Gamaliel Church of Christ . . . . .	10.00
(Gamaliel, MO)	
Marionville Church of Christ . . . . .	10.00
(Marionville, MO)	
Pilot Church of Christ . . . . .	20.00
(Mammoth Spring, AR)	
Clarksridge Church of Christ . . . . .	25.00
(Clarksridge, AR)	

INDIVIDUALS

Billie Joe Graddy . . . . .	\$10.00
(No. Little Rock, AR)	
Beth Gordon . . . . .	5.00
(Costa Mesa, CA)	
Fay Smith . . . . .	25.00
(Hardy, AR)	
Auston F. Phillips . . . . .	10.00
(DeQueen, AR)	
Imogrne White . . . . .	5.00
(In Memory of Beulah White)	

LIFE AFTER DEATH

By Richard England

"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) "Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." ( 1 Cor. 15:51,52)

That the Bible teaches there is life after death is obvious. The most candid reader will see this. The big question is: what will it be like? Some things about life after death we cannot know now. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2) Our body will not be as it is here. (1 Cor. 15:35-50) Even though we do not know all about the nature of the heavenly body that we shall inhabit, we are assured that it will be a glorious body.

The place of our dwelling after the resurrection is described as "a new heaven and a new earth." (2 Pet. 3:13) In what is probably highly symbolic language, nevertheless conveying the thought of transcendent beauty, John says that the gates are of pearl and the streets of pure gold. (Rev. 21:18-21) Jesus said He would prepare a place for us in His Father's house. (John 14:1-3) The grandeur of the world in which we now live is not to be compared with the magnificence of the world to come. Yet, what we see now is full of beauty. What wonders must await us in the eternal home for God's people!

Our hearts beat like drums as we all march toward the inevitable vastness of eternity which lies before us. For some, the departure from this life will be soon. It can't be very long for any of us. Those who have failed to submit to the authority of Jesus Christ and obey His commands will be raised to everlasting punishment. (Matt. 25:46) If one refuses to bow to Christ and confess Him now, he will certainly bow to Him then and admit, to his own destruction, that Jesus is over all. "For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." (Rom. 14:11)

Are you ready for the last trump to sound and all of us be called before the Creator of all things? If you have heard the saving gospel of Jesus Christ and believe Him to be the Son of the Living God, why not repent of sin and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins? (Read Acts 2:38) With this action you become a member of the church of Christ. Being a member of His body, you will want to do His bidding, looking forward to His second coming and the life after death which He provides His faithful disciples.

## Truly Promoting Unity

By Shawn D. Mathis

The scriptures plainly state that "...if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:9.) There are many in the religious world who have and who continue to persist upon perverting the gospel of Christ.

No man has the right to take it upon himself to preach anything except the word of God. Paul in his letter challenging Timothy wrote: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season..." (2 Timothy 4:2.) This charge was to preach the word and the word alone! He was not preach some doctrine that was conjured up by mere man. He was to preach the word and so are we today! It is a sad sight to watch so-called teachers of the truth as they perform their deed contrary to the Lord's commands. These false teachers are willing to lose their souls all because of their apathetic approach to the word of God.

In this world of confusion, many individuals are compelled to follow any doctrine that rides in so long as it is soothing to their itching ears. As a result of the "band wagon" approach, large numbers are led into the sin of denominationalism. The apostle Paul specifically stated "... that there be no divisions among you." (1 Corinthians 1:10.) It is a shame that preachers ignore the teachings on unity which are given in 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 and Ephesians 4:1-6. Christ prayed for unity and Paul pled for unity. It is our responsibility to see that unity is restored and maintained.

Friends, this is the will of God! This is the intended plan for unity. Who are we to change it? Dare any man take it upon himself to change the almighty word of God!

In John 17:20-23 Jesus Christ prayed that all may be one. The only way this unity may be achieved is by laying aside all doctrines of men and by following our guide which is the word of God. Only then will this unity be accomplished. It is time for the religious world to wake and come to the truth. Let it be said of us that we are truly promoting unity as Christ would have it!

Box 1  
Freed-Hardeman College  
Henderson, Tennessee 38340

## THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I 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; I Corinthians 12:13).

## 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; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

**"YOU CAN HELP WITH POSTAGE"**  
**MOVING?**  
 Be sure to send us  
 your change of address



Mail all address changes to:  
**CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**P.O. BOX 251**  
**MAMMOTH SPRING, AR 72554**