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No. 1

Should People Study The Bible?

By Jared Williams

Timothy as a young gospel preacher was charged, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). A constant and consistent study of God's word is necessary. In our lesson we will point out why a study of God's word is important.

1. People should be zealous to study the Bible because it is God's revelation to man. Many today are claiming to have received various revelations. The Bible is God's revelation to man and through His word He talks to us. We are charged to read His word, "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren" (1 Thessalonians 5:27). God working through the prophets and apostles has given us His word. Paul said, "which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Corinthians 2:13). Thanks be to God we have a constant source of instructions in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).

2. People need to study God's word because it takes study to rightly divide the word of truth. Paul said, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Many today are not doing this, they are more concerned with popularity and as a result many precious souls are on a spiritual diet, and others remain in darkness. This charge involves faithfully and rightfully dividing God's word of the three great dispensations of time and proclamation of it.

People need to know, as taught in the scriptures that we do not live under the Mosaic dispensation. Paul said, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way nailing

it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14). This means fleshly circumcision, animal sacrifices and other ordinances of the Old Testament are not binding upon us today.

The law of Moses ending on the cross of Christ and ushered in the Christian age. John said, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). The law of Moses could not free man from his sins, but rather it served to bring him to Christ. Therefore, IN CHRIST one finds deliverance from the guilt, power and presence of sin. How one gets into Christ is clearly set forth in Galatians 3:26, 27. We are going to be judged according to the gospel of Christ (John 12:48). Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (Hebrews 5:8,9). To know and obey God's will for man today requires study.

3. In studying the Bible you will learn of the New Testament church, and how to worship God in spirit and in truth. God has always made known His will for acceptable worship and we find no exception for this in the New Testament. We are told, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Acceptable worship consist of five items of worship; they are prayer, Lord's Supper, preaching, singing and giving as seen in Acts 2:42, 20:7; I Corinthians 11:20 - 30, 16:1, 2; and Colossians 3:16. We are impressed with the organization of the church in the New Testament. The head is Christ (Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18). Each congregation having qualified elders and deacons (1 Timothy 3:1-3; Titus 1:5-11).

4. One cannot know what to do to become a Christian without a knowledge of God's will which we learn in the scriptures. We send forth a plea to all to follow the example of the Bereans (Acts 17:11). They searched the scriptures to

know the truth. You should be interested enough in your soul to do this. You can find the plan of salvation ONLY in the Bible. Jesus said, "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). You can follow the various accounts of conversions and see these things were carried out (Acts 2:36-41; 8:35-38; 16:31-34).

To study, rightly divide God's word can be very rewarding and soul saving.

BEFORE SIX

By Bill Graddy

The research is lacking that proves kindergarten improves the education of children. If the teachers did not know which children were in kindergarten, by the third or fourth grades, they would not be able to identify them.

As we pass by these baby-sitting places, we wonder how much better off these little ones would be at home with their mothers! Our society almost demands that both parents work; however, when all the factors are weighed, granting only the exception, when a mother leaves her preschoolers to work outside the home, it really costs the family. What a price is paid! Our nation will not become any better until the homes become better.

Research does indicate that the first six years of a child's life is when the attitudes and habits are formed. When these traits are woven into a child's personality by the warmth and care of a mother's love, America will not only become a better place but a more intelligent nation.

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"It is not wise to tell everything you know, but it is wise to know everything you tell."

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

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EDITOR Jared Williams

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What Must I Do To Become A Christian

HEAR — "If any man have an ear, let him hear." (Revelations 13:9) "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17).

BELIEVE — Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24) "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT — "I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3) "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30)

CONFESS — "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32) "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9)

BE BAPTIZED — "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16) "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)

"THEN THEY THAT GLADLY RECEIVED HIS WORD WERE BAPTIZED: AND THE SAME DAY THERE WERE ADDED UNTO THEM ABOUT THREE THOUSAND SOULS." (Acts 2:41)

GOD NOW SPEAKS THROUGH HIS SON

By Richard England

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son . . ." (Hebrews 1:1, 2).

In the garden of Eden, God walked and talked with Adam and Eve personally. (Genesis 3:8ff). God spoke directly to Noah and warned him about the flood that was to come (Genesis 6:13). God spoke to Abraham through messengers (Genesis 18). On one occasion, at least, He spoke to him by an angel calling out of heaven (Genesis 22:11). God spoke to Jacob in a dream (Genesis 28:12 - 15). Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, received a message from God at the hand of Joseph (Genesis 41:16). It was out of the burning bush that God spoke to Moses (Exodus 3:1-6). The children of Israel heard God out of the firey, smoky, thunderous mountain (Exodus 19:16 - 25). Elijah heard God in a still small voice (1 Kings 19:12). On and on we could go showing that God did indeed speak to people in the past at many times and in various ways. But, what the writer of Hebrews tells us is that the same God NOW SPEAKS TO US THROUGH HIS SON.

In Deuteronomy 18:15-20, the prophecy of Jesus is that He will come to speak what God would tell Him to speak. Jesus said He had come, not to do His own will, but the will of the Father (John 6:38). God "hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22), and "hath given Him authority to execute judgment" (John 5:27).

When Jesus left the earth, He did not leave people without the necessary information about this great message He brought and the salvation He provided by His suffering and resurrection. He sent the Holy Spirit to teach all the truth and remind in a miraculous way of all His teaching so that nothing would be left unsaid in each generation (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit did not speak Himself, but only what He was told to speak (John 16:13). To hear the Spirit, is to hear what Jesus said. To hear Jesus is to hear what God has said.

When the inspired revelation came to the Apostles, they wrote it down, as instructed (Revelation 1:11) so that we might know what they have received and understand it (Ephesians 3:3, 4). This

message, the gospel, the word, the faith was "once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). That simply means that when it had been complete, the miraculous revelation ceased. This was according to the plan of God (1 Corinthians 13:9 - 13).

That message, the gospel, we must hear, receive and stand in it if we are to be saved (1 Corinthians 15:1, 2). As Deuteronomy 18:15-20 continues to say, we cannot speak anything which He, the Prophet sent from God, did not speak. We are not to attribute something to Him which He has not said, nor are we to speak by any other authority. That Prophet, Jesus Christ, has ALL authority. (Matthew 28:18).

To receive the New Testament is to receive the Apostles teaching. To receive the Apostles teaching is to receive the Holy Spirit. To receive the Holy Spirit is to receive Jesus Christ. To receive Jesus Christ is to receive God. This is the only way God speaks to man today.

The conclusion of this seems rather obvious. We must have a "thus saith the Lord" for all that we believe and practice religiously. Do you? Where do you find the book, chapter and verse for your religious name? Are you following ALL the commands of Jesus for men today? What do you teach people that Jesus requires in order to receive the remission of sins? Can you read it in the Bible? Can you find in the teaching of Jesus, THE NEW TESTAMENT, authority for all the things you do in your worship? If you must answer no to any of these questions, you need to reconsider your convictions.

The Perfect Church

I think that I shall never see

A church that's all it ought to be
A church whose members never stray

Beyond the strait and narrow way.

A church that has no empty pews,

Whose preacher never has the blues;
Where elders "eld" and deacons "deak"

And none is proud, but all are meek.
Where gossips never peddle lies,

Or make complaints, or circize;
Whose members all are sweet and kind,
And to each others' faults are blind.

Such congregations there may be,

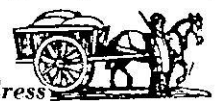
But none of them are known to me;
So let us work and pray and plan

To make this church the best we can.

"YOU CAN HELP WITH POSTAGE"

MOVING?

Be sure to send us
your change of address



THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

By Ernest Loomis

In John 15:5 Jesus said, "I am the vine, and ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." Because of a misunderstanding and/or misapplication of this scripture, the great lesson Jesus teaches in this chapter is lost. It seems that most people believe the branches to be the different religious denominations, but I believe a close study will show the branches to be people, a branch being a person, a Christian. As we study God's word we must study with a desire to learn the truth for Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). We must study that we might rightly divide the truth and be approved unto God (2 Timothy 2:15). We must be honest with ourselves, others, and God, not allowing our pride, prejudices or preconceived ideas to prevent us from learning and obeying the truth.

To better understand the teaching of Jesus here, consider the principal of plant life. All things were created by miracle in the beginning but was given the power of reproduction, and all things produce after their own kind. We all understand this and know we will harvest what we plant. The same principal is true spiritually. Let us note some inconsistencies in the teaching that the branches are different denominations. (1) At the time Jesus was teaching this, the church had not been established, much less divisions having sprung up. In fact, denominations as we know them did not exist for many centuries. (2) In this same conversation with His disciples, just two chapters over, Jesus condemned division (John 17:20-21). (3) This is contrary to divine law. All things produce after their own kind, the seed determines the harvest, and in order to produce different denominations different kinds of seed must be planted; if not, why not? The seed of the kingdom is the pure word of God (Luke 8:11), and when planted will bring forth Christians (1 Peter 1:22-23; Acts 2; Acts 11:26).

What then is Jesus teaching? In John 15:5-6 Jesus said, "I am the vine, YE are the branches: HE that abideth in me, and I in HIM, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me YE can do nothing. If a "MAN" abide not in me, he is cast forth AS A BRANCH, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into

the fire, and they are burned." Can we not see that by the words ye, he, him, and a man, that Jesus is not talking about denominations but individuals? If one does not ABIDE in Christ he cannot bring forth fruit, and if he is unfruitful, he will be cut off as an unfruitful branch. To abide in Christ, one must abide in His teaching (2 John 9-11). To abide in His teaching one must continue to obey His teaching, if not, we have not God. To abide in Christ, one must first get into Christ and this is accomplished by faith (Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24); repentance (Acts 17:30; 2:38; Luke 13:3); confessing Christ (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9-10) and baptism (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:16). This puts one into Christ, but this is only the beginning, one must then be faithful (Revelation 2:10) and fruitful (John 15:5-6). Don't be misled by the teaching of men, believe God's word for IT DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHAT YOU BELIEVE.

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BAPTISM

Viewing a thing from the negative standpoint is a good way to understand and appreciate exactly what it is. Viewing baptism negatively should help us understand it better. What Baptism is NOT —

1. Baptism is NOT merely a physical act but is a gesture of the heart. (Romans 6:16-17; Acts 18:8)
2. Baptism is NOT the putting away of fleshly filth — but is an answer of a good conscience toward God. (1 Peter 3:21)
3. Baptism is NOT a church ordinance — but is a command of the gospel of Christ. (Mark 16:15-16)
4. Baptism is NOT a christening ordinance — but is a condition of salvation from alien sins. (Acts 2:38)
5. Baptism is NOT a Christian duty — but is a condition of becoming a Christian (Galatians 3:26-27).
6. Baptism is NOT a work of man's righteousness — but a command of God's righteousness. (Titus 3:5)
7. Baptism is NOT an outward sign of an inward grace — but is an act of obedience that washes away sins. (Acts 22:16; 2:37-38)
8. Baptism is NOT an act performed to show the world that we are saved — but is an act of obedience complied with in

order to be saved. (Acts 2:38) (The idea of baptism to show the world we are saved is about like wishing our feet to show — prove — we are Americans, or taking a bath to show that we have been healed of an ulcerated stomach!)

9. Baptism is NOT sprinkling or pouring — but is a burial and resurrection (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:4-5)

HAVE YOU OBEYED YOUR LORD IN BAPTISM? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

* * * * *

"When you lie dying, you will probably get very little comfort by counting all the hypocrites that you know in the church."

Seven Steps To Stagnation

1. It won't work —
2. It cost too much —
3. We're not ready for that just yet —
4. That's not our responsibility —
5. We're doing alright without it —
6. We've never done it that way before —
7. We've tried that before and it didn't work —

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE LOST?

One of the most important questions of life is, "What must I do to be saved?" Three times in the book of Acts this question is propounded. First, by the people on Pentecost (Acts 2:37), next by Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:6) and then finally by the jailor in Philippi (Acts 16:30). An equally important question that will get some to consider the value of their soul and the solemnity of their decision is "What must I do to be lost?"

Anything that God does not desire must be something terrible. It must therefore be the most terrible thing to be lost, for God does not desire that anyone should be eternally lost. A "whosoever will" is extended universally. God is not willing that any should perish but all should come to repentance.

DON'T DO ANYTHING

If a person desires to be lost, then the way that he can assure it is to do nothing. Some are not unhesitant to proclaim their morality in terms of — I don't (continued on page 4)

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE LOST?

(continued from page 3)

drink, I don't curse, I am not a thief. This is like adding several zeros and still having nothing but a sum total of zero. Morality is needed, but morality without Christ has no eternal reward. Jesus said, "he that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth" (Luke 11:23).

REJECT CHRIST

If one has his mind made up to be lost then all he must do is to reject Christ. The Master said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Jesus Christ is man's one and only hope. He is the one mediator between God and man. He is our Savior. All it takes to be lost is to ignore and reject the Lord Jesus Christ.

REFUSE TO OBEY THE GOSPEL

If anyone has his mind made up to be eternally lost all he must do is to refuse to obey the gospel of Christ. "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess 1:8). The Lord shall punish with everlasting destruction those who obey not his gospel. The gospel today is the gospel that still has the power to save the world from sin. It is the sweet redemptive story of how God has interceded on our behalf to save us from our sins. It tells of a God who loves us, of a Savior who died for us and of the necessity of accepting his grace by faith.

Yes, if you have your mind made up to be lost this is all it requires — don't do anything, reject Christ, refuse to obey the gospel.

* * * * *

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

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).

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