

# Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Second Class Postage Paid at Mammoth Spring, Ark.

Volume 12

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554

July 1975

Number 55

## Too Many Gospels

By Clovis Ragsdale

On his second missionary trip, Paul established a number of churches in the area of Galatia. A few years after establishing these churches, Paul learned of a problem seriously troubling these Christians. In his effort to correct this problem, Paul wrote, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

Paul was greatly distressed with these brethren for being so easily led astray. He marvelled at the suddenness of their departure. But their departure from the true gospel was accomplished by deceitful men who perverted the gospel. The word pervert means to transform into something of an opposite character, and to twist the meaning or sense of, hence to misinterpret. Paul declares that those who preach a gospel differing from that preached by the apostles are to be accursed. The reason is obviously clear, any other message leads men away from Christ.

What problem did Paul have in mind when he accused these of following after another gospel? In the early days of the church, many Jews became Christians. However, many of these held to parts of the law of Moses as well as trying to follow Christ. Furthermore, they insisted that the Gentile converts do the same. One of the practices these Jewish converts demanded was circumcision. They taught, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." (Acts 15:1.) The apostles had taught the Gentile converts that such was unnecessary. Nevertheless some were persuaded to do this, and in doing so had fallen from the grace of Christ (Gal. 5:1-4). It was for this that Paul strongly castigated these Jewish teachers, charging them with preaching another gospel.

If Paul could look at the many things being taught and practiced by so called Christians today, would he not be just as upset with these things as he was with the Jews? He strongly reprov'd the church in Corinth for allowing divisions among them (I Cor. 1:10-12, 3:3). The divisions

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## The Unfaithful Christian

By James Knight

It has been estimated that fifty per-cent of all who obey the gospel become unfaithful or fall away within seven years after they are converted. This is certainly a great tragedy that needs to be avoided at all cost.

In every community where the church exists there are many unfaithful Christians. Very probably if we could get all unfaithful Christians to attend the services of the church our buildings would be overflowing.

I am writing this article in hope that some who are unfaithful can be reached and brought back into the fold of safety before it is too late. I love all my brothers and sisters in Christ, and I am concerned about their eternal welfare.

In this article we use the word "unfaithful" to mean one who is not true to duty or his promises and we use the word "Christian" as one who has learned the truth about sin and salvation and who has made his decision through obedience to give his life to Christ.

The Bible gives us a clear teaching as to what a person must do to become a Christian. No person can come to Christ apart from being taught the truth (John 6:44-45, 8:32). The word teaches man that he is lost in sin, and that God has provided a Savior; The word provides the basis for his belief in the Savior (John 20:30-31, Rom. 10:17); The word teaches the sinner that he must turn from his sins through repentance (Acts 17:30, Luke 13:3); The word teaches him that he must confess Christ before others (Matt. 10:32, Rom. 10:9-10); And the word teaches that one must be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Rom. 6:3, Gal. 3:27, Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16). In doing these things we are united in a relationship with Christ which Paul describes as a marriage (Rom. 7:4). As in the marriage of husband and wife, we vow our faithfulness to Christ, and to the responsibilities that this relationship places upon us.

There are two groups of unfaithful Christians. The first is composed of those who have left the Lord entirely. They no longer assemble or work with the saints. These readily admit that they are not living as they should, and that they are unfaithful. The second group is composed of those who still attend the services. Some of them may attend all of the

services but their lives do not reflect the life of Christ to others. Others of this group may attend only when they feel like it, maybe Sunday morning only, or even only once a month or less, but if you ask these if they are faithful they will affirm that they are, and become offended because you dared to question their faithfulness. Others of this group are openly doing things not in harmony with God's will, such as, social drinking, dancing, immodest dress, foul language, and other such things that are not pleasing to God.

The New Testament describes the unfaithful Christian in several different ways. In 2 Peter 2:20-22 he is described as one who has become entangled again in the world, "For if after they have escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb. The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

In Hebrews 6:4-6 he is described as one crucifying afresh the Son of God, putting Him to an open shame. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they fall away, to renew them to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." This indicates that in becoming unfaithful there is the danger of becoming so hardened that one cannot come back to God.

In Hebrews 10:28-29 he is described to show again his abuse to Christ, "He that despised Moses law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy

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**The Fulton County Gospel News**

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EDITORS: Erwin Cowen  
and Harrold Turner.

**What Spills Out?**

By John C. Holland

A bucket is dropped and its contents are spilled upon the ground. If milk is upon the ground, the bucket contained milk. If water is upon the ground, the bucket contained water. We know there can be spilled only that which the bucket contained.

As we travel through life we are bumped by the world. As we drive, some thoughtless driver bumps us out of line, or in the grocery store we are rudely pushed. Then and there a little of us spills out. If words that are harsh, thoughts that are evil, or manners that are bad come spilling out it is evidence that our buckets have been too long filled with the wrong contents. It is not how people treat us that determines how we react, but how we want to be treated by others. When a careless person bumps you, do you smile and say something pleasant? Do you act mannerly, as Christ wants us to, regardless of what happens or where it happens?

Jesus said that we could always tell the tree by its fruit. Yes, you can tell what fills your life by what is spilled out when another bumps you. It is from the heart that we speak and act.

We must develop the traits which are seen in the life of Christ, and let his attitude spill from our lives unto the world so that they can see Christ when they bump us. Has the world noted by your life that you have been with Christ?

"Be friendly and you will find yourself among friendly people."

"God sometimes puts us in the dark to prove to us that He is the light."

**Too Many Gospels (Cont.)**

of our present day far exceeds that of the church in Corinth. The edicts of popes, the book of Morman, and the majority vote by group meetings in a convention, which enact or change doctrines to suit the whimsey of men.

From a very early time some have expressed a tendency to change God's word. This attitude brought sin into the world in the garden of Eden. It was attempted and became a problem many times among the children of Israel. It was this that brought about the dark ages in the apostasy of the church. Today this attitude has accomplished the division of our religious world into some three hundred sects, all of which claim to be a part of the true church. It is this lack of respect for the written word that has caused many to dare tamper with the Scriptures. The warning of Paul, "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed" should be ample warning to any that we do not have the right to change any teachings of the New Testament in any way. The one who preaches any other gospel is to be cut off, for this is the meaning of "accursed".

The many divisions in the religious world is one of the greatest hindering causes to converting the world to Christ. With skepticism and infidelity on the rise, it is high time that our religious world set its house in order. Because the failure to do so will further diminish the influence of Christ's teaching in the world that needs truth so desperately. Two gospels is one too many. When all come back to the one preached by the apostles, a basis for unity can be found and the mission of Christ can be accomplished throughout the world. Are you willing to do your part personally in this return?

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

Geraldine Harper . . . . . \$ 2.00  
Eugene Boren . . . . . 10.00

Churches of Christ  
Dellhalf . . . . . 5.00  
Elizabeth . . . . . 5.00  
Sturkie . . . . . 5.00  
Big Pond . . . . . 5.00  
Agnos . . . . . 5.00  
Viola . . . . . 5.00  
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"The man who spends his life building walls instead of bridges has no right to complain if he is lonely."

"Anger is the wind that blows out the lamp of intelligence."

**Heaven Holds All To Me**

By Ted Knight

"Earth holds no treasures but perish with using, however precious they be; yet there's a country to which I am going, heaven holds all to me." For years we have lifted the rafters of our buildings with the sound of these beautiful words. This is a favorite song to many. But, I wonder, do we really mean what we say when we sing these words? Does heaven really mean that much to us? Does the desire to please God and go to heaven occupy first place in our hearts? Are we willing to give up those perishing treasures of this earth in order to go there?

I realize that there are many important things in this life. The choosing of a marriage partner; the choice of occupation; where we shall live; and the rearing of our children are all important things. But I suggest that all of these are of lesser importance than our being prepared for the judgment of God. Whatever else we may or may not accomplish in this life, if we are failures at the judgment bar of God, we are total failures. All of the fame and fortune of this life will not make up for missing heaven.

Have you considered the number of people who will miss heaven? Have you ever thought of the millions who will allow something else to become more important to them? Why are they lost? Why do they choose something other than God's way?

Some will miss heaven because they allow someone else to influence them in the wrong way. They run with the wrong crowd and are not strong enough to pull away and make their own decisions. It is too hard to stand up for Jesus so they just drift along with the crowd. Maybe it's the hypocrite in the church who stands in the way. Yes, there are hypocrites in the church, but you should not let them determine your destiny. Will you let those who are critical of you control your thinking and cause you to miss heaven? My friends, we must control our own thinking regardless of what others may think of us.

Some will miss heaven because they love the world too much. We are warned in the word of God about this danger in James 4:4 and I John 2:15-17. But, we love the things of this life and are blinded by the glitter of those things which money can buy for us. It impresses our friends. Why can we not learn from the account of the rich man in Luke 16 that all the goods of this earth are not as

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# Does Man Have A Soul?

By Harold Turner

I have on numerous occasions encountered a religious doctrine which denies that man has a soul. The doctrine affirms that man is a soul, not has a soul. This doctrine also affirms that the soul dies and ceases to exist, rather than returning back to God at death. Does the Bible teach and support this doctrine?

In Gen. 2:7 the Bible states, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." This is used to show that man is a soul rather than having a soul. Surely we recognize that many times in the Bible a word may be used in more than one sense. The word "man" is used both in reference to the physical body and to the whole entire person. Likewise the word "soul" is used in the same two senses, referring to the inward spiritual part of man and to the whole person.

Let us observe several Scriptures that show the soul to be distinct from the fleshly body. In Job 14:22 "But the flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn." Here the soul is stated to be something within man. In Matt. 10:28 Jesus said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Here again we have a clear distinction between body and soul. The soul being a part of man that another cannot kill. In Gen. 35:18 when Rachel died, the Bible states, "And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni..." This clearly shows that in death the soul departs from the body rather than dying with the body. In I Kings 17:22, after the son of a widow in Zarephath had died, Elijah prayed, "Let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." Again this shows that in death the soul departs from the body, being distinct from the body.

The above Scriptures show that the soul is the inward part of man that cannot be killed by others, and that which departs from the body when it dies. Those who deny that man has a soul affirm that the soul is not immortal and that it dies. The proof used to support this is found in Ezek. 18:20, which states, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die..." What does it mean that the soul dies? Does it mean that the soul ceases to exist? To die, or death literally means a separation. Note James 2:26, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith

without works is dead also." The body is dead when the spirit separates from it. Faith is dead when works are separated from it. In what sense does the soul die? Ezekiel 18:20 shows that it is sin that causes the soul to die. Isa. 59:2 states, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God..." These are parallel statements. Sin kills the soul, sin separates the soul from God. Hence the soul dies in that it is separated from God, not in that it ceases to exist. In John 10:10 Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life..." Were they dead? Yes. But in what sense? They were dead in sin, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;" Eph. 2:1. In 1 Tim. 5:6 Paul describes the sinner, who lives in pleasure, as being "dead while she liveth."

Ezek. 18:20 does not teach that the soul goes into the grave with the body when it dies. We have seen in Gen. 35:18 that the soul departs from the body when it dies. The soul dies to God because of sin. However, the soul can be redeemed from this separated state. James 1:21 states, "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." In James 5:20 when one errs from the truth and we turn him back again, James says, "Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." Our souls can be saved from death, but our bodies are appointed to die. In 2 Cor. 4:16 Paul wrote, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." The outward man is this earthly tabernacle of flesh, but the inward man is the soul, which when it departs from the body will live forever with God, "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." (2 Cor. 5:6,8.) In picturing death, Solomon wrote in Eccl. 12:5, "man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:" In the body, the soul has only a temporal dwelling place, but when he dies, he goes to his long or eternal dwelling place.

Yes, man does have a soul. A soul that can be lost or saved. If we persist in living in sin, God has promised to destroy that soul in hell (Matt. 10:28.) If we will come to Christ and follow Him, that soul can live eternally with God. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet

## Heaven Holds (Cont.)

important as serving the Lord faithfully? Jesus asked, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Matt. 16:26.

Some will miss heaven because they simply refuse to do God's will, even though they know what His will is. Jesus made it clear that only those who do the will of God will be saved. Regardless of our opinions in the matter of our interpretations of the Scripture, we must still do God's will. "Not every one 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). Until we are willing to say, "Lord, Thy will be done" in every aspect of life, we will not be acceptable to him.

"Heaven holds all to me." Does it really? Are we being real honest with ourselves? I pray that you will consider seriously this very vital matter.

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"The water is shallowest where it babbles."

"It isn't necessary to blow the other fellow's light out to let your's shine."

"If there is righteousness in the heart... there will be beauty in the character... if there is beauty in the character... there will be harmony in the home... if there is harmony in the home... there will be order in the nation... if there is order in the nation... there will be peace in the world."

"True success consists not in getting more than others, but in doing more."

"Happy is the church member whose calendar contains a midweek meeting."

"Like a rat, sin requires some dark hole for indulgence."

"A man may make a lot of money, and be unmade by his money."

"It isn't necessary to blow the other fellow's light out to let yours shine."

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shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25-26).

## A Question On

# THE ELDERSHIP

By Harold Turner

The following question was submitted from one of our readers.

Must a man, who is serving as an elder, and is qualified in every other respect, resign because one of his grown children becomes unfaithful? Does this disqualify him?

This question is obviously derived from a study of the qualifications for an elder found in I Timothy 3:2-5. Here the Bible states, "A bishop then must be . . . one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)"

For the benefit of those who may not be familiar with these expressions, the Bible makes no distinction between an elder and a bishop. These terms are both applied to the same office of work. (Compare I Tim. 3:1-7 with Titus 1:5-9).

The qualifications in the above Scripture states a twofold responsibility for the elder/bishop. (1). He is to rule well his own house. (2). He is to minister care to the church of God. I believe that the proper answer to the above question demands an understanding of the scope of this twofold responsibility. What is "his own house" that he is to rule? What is the "church of God" for which he is responsible to minister care?

In God's plan for the organization of the church, he designed that there be elders in each congregation (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5). These men were charged with the spiritual oversight of the congregation over which they were appointed (Acts 20:28, I Pet. 5:2-3). The elders have the responsibility of watching for the souls of each member within their congregation (Heb. 13:7,17). However, elders are not accountable for the members of other congregations. Too, when a member moves from one congregation to another, he moves from the responsibility of one eldership to another. The elders of the congregation which he left are no longer accountable for his welfare, but rather the elders of the congregation where he moved to.

If the above be true, and it is, let us suppose that a member moves from one congregation into another area where he begins worshiping and working with another congregation. After a time he becomes unfaithful. Are the elders of the congregation he first moved away from responsible and accountable for him? Sure, as Christian men, they would be concerned about his salvation, but are they chargeable for his growing unfaithful? The Bible charges the elders

only with the congregation over which they have been appointed. They are not chargeable for a member or membership of another congregation. Hence the scope of responsibility of the elders to the care of the church of God is to the one local congregation over which they are appointed.

The second comparative responsibility with which the elder is herein charged is to "rule well his own house." What is included in "his OWN house?" In I Tim. 5:8 Paul shows that one's own house is that for which he is directly responsible to provide - "But if any provide not for his own, specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." His own house is limited to those living under his provision. This would include his wife and his children living under his care.

Are children, which have moved away from their father's house, still considered as "his own house?" Jesus said, in Matt. 19:5, "For this cause shall a man LEAVE father and mother, and shall CLEAVE to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh." When a grown child leaves the household of his parents and takes a wife he then constitutes another house, his own house, over which he is responsible to provide. He is then no longer in his father's house, under his father's provision, but becomes the head of his OWN house.

Certainly an elder, as any Christian would be, is concerned about the welfare of his children, whether they be at home or heading their own home. However, when a child has grown up a faithful Christian in the house of his father, moves away from home, establishes his own house, and then becomes unfaithful, for us to claim that this disqualifies an elder within itself, is going beyond the authority of the Scriptures. The elder is to rule well his OWN house. When his children move away and marry they are no longer of HIS house, but establishes their own house. As the elder is chargeable only for the membership within the congregation over which he is appointed, he is also responsible only for the members within his OWN house. His ability to keep his children under subjection is one reason for appointing him with the care of the church. He is no more responsible for keeping his children, who are no longer under his rule, under subjection with all gravity; than he is for taking care of the members of the church, who do not any longer belong to the congregation over which he oversees.

## The Unfaithful Christian (Cont.)

thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

In John 15:1-6, Jesus describes the unfaithful as a fruitless branch, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit . . . Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me . . . 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."

In Revelation 3:16 Jesus expressed that unfaithfulness is sickening, "So because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

The above expresses the hurt of unfaithfulness. The unfaithful Christian brings shame upon Christ, and no doubt breaks the heart of Jesus. He brings himself into a condition where he faces eternity lost and displeasing to God. He becomes a hinderance to the progress of the church, and to the lost who might otherwise obey. If you are unfaithful, won't you please repent, and return to Christ?

## Gospel Meeting

The church of Christ in Mammoth Spring, Ark., will have brother Glynn Purdy for a gospel meeting on July 28 through August 3. Services will begin each evening at 7:30 p.m. except Sunday, which will be at 6:30 p.m. The public is invited to attend these meetings. For free transportation call 625-3874 or 625-3901.

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas  
Rosa Bagdala