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"ME-ISM" IS NOT FROM GOD

By Ted Mountjoy

We live in a self-centered world today. We have a world-wide concept of "Me-ism", meaning self is always first, and others, if considered at all, are last. The ads of the day reflect this concept: "We do it all for you," "Made your way," "Especially for you," etc. "Please," "Thank you," and "You're welcome" are expressions that seem to be outdated and almost forgotten. Everyone tries to be independent of everyone else. Each wants to direct his own life in his own way, in short, "do your own thing."

We are reaping the consequences of "Me-ism". One out of every two marriages ends in divorce. Children, in many cases are neglected, having no discipline, love or family life; because their parents are too involved with work, recreation, etc., to spend the time needed in raising their children properly. Inflation is rampant; there are many reasons for it, but one of the main reasons is that it seems everyone is out to get all he can get, as quickly as he can get it, no matter who gets hurt in the process. Our social, economic and even religious problems can be traced to this "Me-ism" philosophy.

"Me-ism" is just the opposite of the Lord's way. Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness..." (Matt. 6:33), not selfish desires first, not what we think is right, but what God says is right. If we do that, then God will provide our needs for food and clothing.

The "golden rule" is almost a forgotten commandment. "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." (Matt. 7:12). It means exactly what it says.

In Luke 9:23, Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, he MUST deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me." In order to follow Jesus, one has to put Jesus first, above his own life and above his own desires, and accept whatever consequences may come because of that decision. Few today deny themselves the pleasures of sin, dope, drinking, parties, and whatever desires they can or cannot afford, they seek to satisfy. Denying self in order to put God first in their life is almost unheard of.

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teachings you are really my disciples." (John 8:31). Most people today don't want anyone telling them what to do. Jesus makes demands. The reason he does is because he is the Son of God and he knows what is best for us. Contrary to popular belief, he does rule heaven and earth today (Matt. 28:18). He is perfect; we are not. He knows what's best for us. "Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the

weakness of God is stronger than man's strength." (1 Cor. 1:24-25.) It's always been more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35), because God says so, and his hand is in the blessing. Jesus has the right to make demands, because it's by his word we will be judged (John 12:48).

"Me-ism" is not from God. The Lord's way is the best way, and the ONLY way to life. Take it, and you'll never be sorry.

"Man may make riches, but riches never make a man."

ARE YOU RUNNING THE

By Larry Corbett

CHRISTIAN RACE WELL?

In Gal. 5:7 Paul wrote, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" It is a joy and a thrill to see good athletes perform well, and sad when such is not the case. No doubt these words of Paul are among the saddest that he ever wrote; because these Christians of Galatia had started the race well, but they had not continued to do so. They had gotten bogged down in the teaching of Judiasm, which hindered their continued progress in the gospel. This problem had caused some of them to fall from grace, which meant that much of Paul's labor among them was in vain.

When I was in high school I participated in the track and field sports. I ran in the mile and in the two mile events. One thing I learned well was that it is an individual effort to run the race well, and to finish the race well requires giving it your best effort. No one can run the race for you, it is totally dependent on your own effort and ability to cross that finish line. There is a team effort to beat your opponent, but it is through the result of each individual's effort that winning is obtained.

In comparison, the Christian race is also an individual effort to run and finish the race well. And, too, there is a team

effort on the part of the church to beat the opponent. The team works together to edify and admonish one another to keep each one running the race well.

There were times when I was running in a race that I felt I just couldn't take another step, which was usually in the third quarter of the mile run. But the team would gather around the track yelling encouragement for me to continue, and due to their concern for me I never dropped out of the race.

There are many times when Christians need some of this encouragement to keep them from dropping out of the race, or from slowing down to the point the opponent begins to take the lead. Some, who started the race with much enthusiasm, have now stopped running. These need special encouragement to get them back onto the track and running well in the Christian race. Some of these are still attending the worship services, but are not participating in the race by teaching classes, teaching lost souls, encouraging the weary, and by practicing honesty, fairness, and good morals in their daily lives. These are sometimes referred to as bench warmers. A bench warmer can't win a crown of life. Each one must be a participant in the greatest race of all. We

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EDITORS: Erwin Cowen and
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In What Manner Should

By Robert Ball

The manner in which one should be baptized is a very important subject. However, we are fortunate that we have such a vast amount of evidence dealing with this subject. Yet we must keep in mind that not all information on this or any subject is true. What then is the reliable evidence dealing with this subject? I believe with all my heart that the only

One Be Baptized?

source of information and evidence that we can use is God's inspired word, which is revealed in the Bible. In 2 Tim. 3:16-17 the Bible states, "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." Since we have the Bible, the inspired word of God, we have all the proof we need and all the proof that really counts.

Now, in what manner are we to be baptized according to God's word? In Mark 1:9 when the Lord Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan, the Bible says, "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan." Notice that Mark states that Jesus was baptized of John in the Jordan. Too, in Rom. 6:3-4 the Scriptures state, "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." These passages show that baptism is a burial in water.

The action of baptism, as pictured in the Bible, was a complete immersion of the body in water. This was a likeness to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death." (Rom. 6:4.) When we are raised up from this watery grave we walk in a newness of life because all of our past sins have been forgiven and washed away by the blood of Christ. Notice that Paul said, "We were baptized into Christ Jesus." In 2 Cor. 5:17 he states, "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new."

There are many people, and religious organizations, who teach and believe that a person can be baptized by sprinkling or by pouring water upon a person's head. However, in this study, we are trying to learn what the early Christians did, and what the inspired apostles of Christ taught in the New Testament. I have not found one place in the New Testament

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"No matter where you go, there you are!"

SELF — ESTEEM

By Donnie F. Mangrum

Individuals have a big obligation to themselves in life. It appears that we preach and teach so much on how a person should love his neighbor, to be nice to other people, and to care for the outsider, which is certainly needed, however, we must not forget the value of our self.

In 1 Samuel 16:7, the Lord said to Samuel, "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." We have a tendency, if we are not as attractive as we think we should be, to become a down-grader of our self. One must have respect for himself in order to be able to help others.

In Genesis 1:31, after having created all things, God said, "It was very good." This included man. If God saw fit to say that his creation was very good, we should feel the same about it, including self.

If we have the kind of respect for ourselves that God has for us we will desire to take good care of our bodies. Our world is full of various vices which are harmful to the body. It is not proper to destroy that which we respect; therefore it is not proper to destroy our bodies with these vices. In 1 Cor. 6:19-20 Paul said, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." So, one of the most prized ways we can serve God is to take care of that which he has purchased. The longer our body and life lasts, the more years we can serve our God. In Rom. 12:1-2 Paul also stated, "That ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which

is your reasonable service." When we begin to mistreat our bodies in our everyday living, we affect our relationship with God. Our self-esteem can be better maintained when our bodies are treated with "love and care" as God intended.

In Phil. 4:11 Paul said, "For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." He was not indicating that he would never desire better things in life, or that he wasn't going to put forth an effort to do better, he simply said that when he had done all that he could he would be content with that. In life, each of us knows when we have done our best, and that is all that God requires of us. Some people are great singers, some great speakers, others can teach small children, etc. Each one of these is important in life, and should feel that their role is important. Have you ever thought what life would be like if all people were alike? If everybody was a barber, we would not have any doctors; likewise if everybody was a doctor who would cut our hair? We need to respect our self for who we are, if we are serving God faithfully, that is all he requires.

We are unique in that we are different because God wanted us that way. We all have our own mind, body, dreams, and fears, and success or failure still belongs to us. Thank God for what you are, and do the very best you can. Start by knowing that you, yourself, are important.

"I ask not for faith to move mountains — just to move me."

"You cannot go in the wrong direction and arrive at the right destination."

"Gossip is halitosis of the brain."

The Church In Prophecy

By Harold Turner

In Matt. 16:18 Jesus promised, "I will build my church." With some this promise was brought about because Jesus was rejected by his own people. The church was a substitute for what he originally planned to establish. Many hold this idea, believing that Jesus had originally planned to set up his kingdom, but because of his rejection, he substituted the church until the proper time for the kingdom to be established. But the church is not some spur of the moment idea, nor was it designed as a substitute for the kingdom of God. In Eph. 3:1-11 Paul makes it clear that the church was in the mind of God in the beginning, and was God's eternal purpose for man. To suggest that the church is just a temporary substitute is to minimize its value and purpose in the mind of God.

Though the full picture of the church was not disclosed in the Old Testament, there are several prophecies that show the church was in God's purpose long before it was established. The book of Isaiah was written close to 750 years B.C. In this book we have a prophecy that obviously foretells of the coming church. In Isa. 2:2-3, Isaiah wrote, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

There are five or more things about this Scripture that relates it to the coming church. It reveals the period of time in which the church was to be established, the description of the church, the value of it, its scope, and the place of its beginning.

Let's first consider the description of the church given by Isaiah. He tells us that "the Lord's house" was to be established. Of course, this statement taken within itself may not offer so much proof that he is speaking of the coming church, but when viewed in light of the whole of this prophecy, it seems evident that this is the case. The house of God in the Old Testament had already been established. In comparing Christ and Moses, the writer of Hebrews 3:3-6 states, "For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house . . . And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over

his own house; whose houses are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." The house of Moses was evidently the children of God under the old testament period—the nation of Israel. The Lord's house today evidently is the Christians—those within the household of Christ. "Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we," evidently is referring to Christians. Too, in 1 Tim. 3:15 the Bible speaks of "The house of God, which is the church of the living God." From these two passages we at least learn that the church is spoken of as the house of God. Paul told the Christians at Ephesus, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." (Eph. 2:19.) So Christians today make up the household of God—they belong to the house of Christ—which is the church.

A second thing about Isaiah's prophecy is regarding the period of time in which the Lord's house was to be established. He said this would take place "In the last days." And, too, while this statement may not within itself prove that Isaiah was talking about the church, it does help support this idea. The Bible does not specifically tell us the exact time when the "last days" began, however, from Acts 2:16-17 we know that they were spoken of as being in existence at that time. They are not spoken of before this time as being in existence, which may indicate that they began at this time. This passage states, "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days . . ." Since this was that which was to take place in the last days, the last days had to have been in existence then. Isaiah said the Lord's house would be established in the last days. From the above passages we learned that the church is spoken of as the Lord's house. And we know that the church came into being in Acts 2. Those who responded to the preaching of the gospel were added to the church. Therefore, the church was established within the period called "the last days."

A third thing of significance about Isaiah's prophecy is the scope of the Lord's house. It was to include "all nations." God established no other institution than the church to include all nations. The church was to unite all followers of Christ from all nations in one household. In the great commission of Mark 16:15 Jesus instructed the apostles to go into "all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." In Matt. 28:19 they were instructed to "teach all na-

tions." Never before was such a commission given. From the reading of Eph. 2:11-19 we see that the Gentiles (nations) were not a part of God's household before the coming of Christ. Jesus came to reconcile both Jew and Gentile unto God in one body, which is the household of God, the church. And in Eph. 3:6, as he continues this discussion, he said, "That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." Since the church is the only institution established by our Lord, which was designed to include all nations, this strongly indicates that Isaiah was foretelling the coming of the church.

A fourth thing that also adds to this support is the place where the Lord's house was to be established. Isaiah indicates that Jerusalem is the beginning place, and from which the word of the Lord would go forth. In his final words to the apostles, Jesus said, "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:47.) In verse 49 he instructed them to "tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." In Acts 1:4 Jesus again emphasized that they were not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Spirit, which was to bring them the power to preach the gospel. In Jerusalem the Spirit came upon the apostles, they preached the word of the Lord "in Jerusalem", and as a result of this preaching three thousand people obeyed the gospel and were added to the church. The church was established in Jerusalem first, and from here it spread throughout the world.

And one other thing about Isaiah's prophecy, he tells us the Lord's house was to be exalted above the hills. What institution has been more exalted than the church? Jesus preached it with his own blood (Acts 20:28.) Eph. 1:3, 2:6 Christ has "raised us up" to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The church is as much above every institution as a mountain is above a hill. It was bought with his blood, it consists of the saved (Acts 2:47) and it is pictured as Christ's body and his bride.

Based upon the fact that all these statements made by Isaiah fit perfectly into the church, it is evident that he was foretelling of the coming church. It is the only house that Christ has, it is for all nations, it was established at Jerusalem and from here spread throughout the world, it is exalted above every institution on earth, and it was established within the period of Isaiah's prophecy. The church was not a substitute for anything, it was in God's eternal purpose for the redemption of fallen man, and we must be a part of it to be saved and live in the hope of eternal life. Christ is the saviour of the church (Acts 2:47, Eph. 5:23).

ARE YOU RUNNING THE CHRISTIAN RACE WELL? continued from page 1

can't win by becoming spectators watching others run the race.

The Galatians had started the race well, but they did not continue. This placed them in a serious condition. It is better not to begin a race than to begin and quit. The apostle Peter once wrote, "For if after they had escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them 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." (2 Peter 2:20-21).

The Christian race is not without obstacles, but these obstacles have not been placed in our way by God; for we read in James 1:13. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." James continues to show that every person is tempted when is he "drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." Satan does everything he can to distract and hinder us from running the race well. In 1 Thess. 2:18 Paul said, "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us." The work of Satan is to hinder our obedience to the truth. He hinders the sinner from becoming a Christian, and he hinders the Christian as he tries to live a faithful consecrated life.

Satan works to convince us that it is easier to forsake the worship of God, keep our money, and be self-centered; than to give of our time, talents and money for the cause of Christ. We cannot engage in works of the flesh and run well the Christian race. We must make a choice between serving Satan and Jesus. John warns us, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15). Has love for worldly things pulled you out of the race? Hinderances can be overcome, as John shows in Rev. 3:5, saying, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels." Overcoming requires faith, desire, will and vision.

To run well is to continue obeying the truth of the gospel. The Christian life is one of continual obedience. At the judgment, we will be judged on the basis of how hard we tried to run a good race and to overcome the hinderances of Satan. Christ will help us to run the race well if we will let him. Remember Phil. 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Let's strive hard to run the Christian race. Let's put forth

more effort in the future than we have in the past. Our soul's destiny depends on how well we finish the race.

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IN WHAT MANNER SHOULD ONE BE BAPTIZED? continued from page 2.

where baptism was performed in any manner other than by complete immersion in water. Along with Rom. 6:4, where the scriptures state that we are buried in baptism, notice Col. 2:12, "Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead." Too, in Acts 8:30-39 we have the example of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, who desired that Philip baptize him. This account tells us that the eunuch was a man of great authority, he was not an ignorant man, yet when Philip ran to him he found the man reading from the book of Isaiah. Philip asked the eunuch if he understood what he was reading, and the man answered, "How can I except some one shall guide me." He then asked Philip to come up and sit with him. The passage he was pondering was from Isaiah 53, which stated, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before his shearer is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth; In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; his generation who shall declare; For his life is taken from the earth." The eunuch then asked Philip of whom the prophet was speaking. Philip began with this same scripture and "preached unto him Jesus." And the Bible then tells us, "And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Now, let's ask the question, How did the eunuch know about baptism? It is not mentioned in the story until this point. Philip had preached unto him Jesus, and he desires to be baptized. Evidently the preaching of Jesus includes preaching his plan for saving lost man, and this includes being baptized. Next, how

was the eunuch baptized? The Bible states, "And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing."

The Bible is very clear in what it teaches about baptism. Our Lord sanctioned baptism by being baptized himself in the river Jordon, and he commanded that his followers also be baptized. But why should one be baptized? In Acts 2:38 baptism was commanded in order to receive the remission of sins, notice it, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." Baptism is also required in order to save a person. In Acts 2:41 Peter had continued to encourage these to save themselves, and they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Too, in 1 Peter 3:21 the apostle states, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us . . ." And, in Mark 16:16 Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

We must be baptized in the right manner, by being completely immersed in water for the remission of our sins. Jesus was completely immersed in baptism, and in every example of baptism where the manner is discussed, the people were completely immersed in water. If we are going to follow the Bible we too must follow the pattern our Lord has given us.

