

# Expository Files



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The Front Page

*Matthew 24*  
*Take Some Confidence In The Simple*  
*Warren E. Berkley*

The 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew may have a reputation that is exaggerated. Considered one of the most misunderstood and abused passages in the New Testament, we may be tempted to just skip it. *“Too difficult for me, I’ll study it later.”* I hope this article gets to you before you take that approach. Let me bring up four simple things that can help you get through the chapter and get the point.

**ONE, use the Old Testament as your guide** to the figurative (apocalyptic) language. To discover what “the abomination of desolation” is about, consult the book of Daniel. To learn more about verse 29, see Isa. 13:10; Ezek. 32:7; Isa. 34:4-6. Becoming acquainted with the language of divine judgment typically used by the prophets will provide great help in getting through Matthew 24. {It will also form a sound background for the study of Revelation!}

**TWO, start by observing these simple facts of context:** Jesus and His disciples were leaving the temple area in Jerusalem. The disciples called attention to the buildings of the temple. Jesus said these buildings would be destroyed. They wanted to know more. All of this is found by reading verses 1-3. You won’t need a commentary, dictionary, lexicon or concordance. Fix in your mind the scene, the people, the setting, the questions. This is easy.

**THREE, read the parallel accounts in Mark and Luke.** Luke 21:20-24 specifically identifies Jerusalem as the object of this great judgment. See also Mark 13:1-27.

**FOUR,** observe the difference between *what would happen soon* and be *accompanied by signs* (see verses 4-35), and what would *be distant and not accompanied by signs* (verses 36-51). The destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD) would happen within the lifetime of those listening to Jesus (see verse 34). The end of the world? "...you do not know what hour your Lord is coming." In the earlier section (vss. 4-35), Jesus said "know that it is near," but in this section (36-51), he gives no signs and says, "you do not know." That must be a contextual factor you calculate into your conclusions about the chapter.

I've not answered all your questions or solved all the problems. My only purpose has been to give the reader some confidence and direction. The destruction of Jerusalem is history (70 AD). But there is another event ahead, in which we will all participate. "Therefore, be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming," (Matt. 24:42).

Warren E. Berkley

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## *The King's Verdicts* *Matt. 25:31-46*

People want to know what it will be like when Jesus comes back. There is a sensational/speculative tone to the inquiries people raise about the end of time. While that kind of interests is understood regarding the ultimate dramatic event, there is something very personal that should consume our thoughts. Instead of instinctively focusing on the dramatic, the speculative and subjective, there is a personal perspective that must never escape our notice. Something Jesus said just hours before His death should help fasten our attention on this personal aspect.

<sup>31</sup>*"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. <sup>32</sup>All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a*

shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup>And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup>Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: <sup>35</sup>for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; <sup>36</sup>I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

<sup>37</sup>"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? <sup>38</sup>When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? <sup>39</sup>Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' <sup>40</sup>And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

<sup>41</sup>"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: <sup>42</sup>for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; <sup>43</sup>I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

<sup>44</sup>"Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' <sup>45</sup>Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' <sup>46</sup>And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Whether you are ready or not, Jesus will come "in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him," and He will "sit on the throne of His glory." We do not know when (24:36-51; 25:13). It will be unexpected, sudden and universal. "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats." This is the final judgment scene, described elsewhere as "the coming of the day of God," (2 Pet. 3:10). To get in touch with the eternal importance of this, jump ahead to the last verse and observe **only two destinies**: "everlasting punishment" or "eternal life."

"The Lord's first coming was inglorious according to the worldly standards, but His second will be in a splendor that fully reflects His might and majesty (16:27; 17:2). Accompanying Him will be the angelic host (2 Thess. 1:7-8).

After He is seated upon His throne, all who have ever lived will be gathered before Him,” (Ken Chumbley, p.#445, Commentary on Matthew).

**This will be a great separation.** Have you noticed in many court rooms, the accused occupies a place separate from the innocent, the victim or the prosecutor. According to Boles, “it was the custom of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court, to place the guilty person on the left hand of the judges, and the innocent on the right. The right hand was considered the place of honor (Psa. 45:9).” More directly related to Jesus’ illustration, shepherds in that time would separate sheep and goats. Given the context, Jesus wants us to know that this day is ahead and it will witness a great separation between those destined for “everlasting punishment” and those with the better destiny, “eternal life.”

**The King speaks to those on the right hand.** They hear words positive, warm and approving. “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Next, the King explains the approval: “for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.” The righteous are surprised and inquire: “When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?” The answer: “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to **one of the least of these My brethren**, you did it to Me.”

Regarding this benevolence as directed to the followers of Christ, note that phrase: “you did it to one of the least of **these My brethren**,” Burton Coffman well observes:

*No thoughtful person can conclude that Jesus equated salvation with benevolence in the usual sense. It is not mere charity, but help of Christ's followers that is highlighted here. If this principle were more widely understood and accepted, it would revolutionize men's attitude toward the church. In the final essence, what men do to his church, they do to him. To neglect, flout, or dishonor the church is to do the same to Christ who is the head of the church. On the other hand, those who support and provide for the church and extend their concern and constant aid upon behalf of her*

*poor and needy, do the same for Christ whose body is the church. (Burton Coffman, Commentary on Matthew).*

**Observe, the King's judgment does not depend upon amount of knowledge amassed, fame acquired, wealth earned and reputation gained.** The approval is based on service rendered to those who belong to Christ; such service is ultimately *to Him!* This is about simple acts of help rendered to those in need who belong to Christ; things which anyone can do. *Yet, it is not simply a humanitarian form of charity or worldly philanthropy.* This service is given out of hearts where God is present. This service is offered through lives lived in submission to the King. We know that because of one simple phrase, "you did it to Me." What counts here is not just service to others, but service to others that is "unto Him."

**Every person is to be rewarded according to their works** (see Matt. 16:27; 2 Cor. 5:10). You will not be able to "borrow" righteousness from your neighbor (see Matt. 25:1-13). You will not be justified in the claim that you were "clothed" or "protected" by the "righteousness of Christ," when in fact you did not live in obedience to Him (Heb. 5:9). You must be ready to account for what you have done. Have you responded to Christ to be forgiven of your sin (Acts 2:38)? Have you walked in the light, confessing your sins (1 Jno. 1:7-9)? If your answers to these questions are "yes," your service to others will be manifest from a heart that submits to the King.

This judgment scene "tells me that **I am accountable.** I am free to live my life just as I please, but at the end I shall have to give account to the one who gave me my life," (Leon Morris).

I need to be ready for this day. And I need to warn everyone I know of this day that will be, for many, "the weeping and gnashing of teeth."

## **DIVINE OBLIGATIONS**

*by Don Hooton*

*If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. So*

*then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh-- for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live, For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Romans 8:10-14).*

Obligations. We all have them. Whether job, family or money related, we know what it means to have an “obligation.” The King James uses the word “debtor” in this verse which might give a stronger sense. Yet what Paul says to all Christians is that we owe these matters to Christ and God as matters of solemn obligation. Even the great Apostle who championed among his Jewish peers and non-Jewish converts a great sense of gospel liberty explicitly declares Christian *obligation*. What is it?

*We are obligated to end our affair with the flesh.* Of course, this does not mean that we have stopped being human or that sin will never again brings its troubles (1John 1:5-10). Rather, it means that the power of God’s presence in us and among us should give compelling inertia in our desires for things of “the spirit.” Our obligations require the end of carnal methods, fleshly indulgences and ungodly motives to the things we do. Further, the very explicit works of the flesh like “immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these” (Galatians 5:19-21) should not even resonate with our reputations. We must “put them to death” – forever ending sin’s addictive stranglehold on us. It is our duty to honor Him who raised Christ Jesus and gave us life by keeping these obligations.

*Further, we are obligated to live according to the Spirit.* Just as our entrance to life in Christ was through the birth of the Spirit (John 3:5) by the washing of the word (Ephesians 5:26), His renewing presence (Titus 3:5) needs to manifest itself in our lives. The fruit He brings is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). This perseverance He brings through the Scriptures He inspired (Romans 15:4) comes as we regularly open, learn and apply His word. He will lead us on and make us strong because God has brought us from death to life. He gives “life to our mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (Romans 8:11). So rise up and fulfill your obligations because in doing so, you honor Him who raised Jesus Christ.

You see some obligations become second nature – loving your wife, loving your kids, feeding your body – because we know the good that comes to us because of it. When Christians will rise to see the result of living in the Spirit, our debts and our obligations will stop feeling like oppressive duty the devil wants us to think they are and become in our hearts the same desire of the Spirit of God. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome” (1John 5:2).

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***Remember Shiloh!***  
***(Jeremiah 7:1-7)***  
***By Jon W. Quinn***

In the days of Jeremiah (ca. 600 B.C.), the people of Judah faced difficult times. The northern kingdom of Israel was history, taken into Assyrian captivity. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had defeated Assyria, and was making his way into Judah.

The people of Judah had developed a false trust. They were placing their confidence and hopes everywhere but the place where it would have done them some good. It is through the prophet Jeremiah that the Lord condemns as useless the false hopes created in the hearts of the people of Judah by the leaders.

It is still possible today to put our hope and confidence in the wrong place. We would do well to avoid making the same critical mistake as Judah did. We read of that false trust and how the Jehovah responded to it in the seventh chapter of Jeremiah.

**The False Trust of Judah**

First, the people placed their confidence in the temple buildings themselves (vss. 1-7). The Lord responded, "Do not trust in deceptive words, saying, "This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.'" (Jeremiah 7:4).

The people were under the impression that the mere fact that the temple was located in Jerusalem would spare the city. The Lord sent Jeremiah to the temple itself to preach that it would take genuine repentance to reverse the situation (Jeremiah 7:1-7).

Then, as now, Lord required more than rituals involving temple worship and outward piety. Repentance would mean not only true-hearted worship of the Lord, but also a change in how the people treated one another; that their dealings were to be just and honorable and without oppression.

Second, they sought to excuse their obvious sins (Jeremiah 7:8-11). Again, theirs was a false trust in that they were being led to think that they could sin and not be held accountable. "Behold, you are trusting in deceptive words to no avail" (Jeremiah 7:8). After committing transgression, they would go to the temple thinking that would absolve them: "...then come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, "We are delivered!" -- that you may do all these abominations?" (Jeremiah 7:10). The Lord could see through such hypocrisy and responds by saying that this, too, is a false hope. He says, "Remember Shiloh!" - (Jeremiah 7:12).

Shiloh is where the tabernacle had stood before the temple had been built at Jerusalem, and was at that time the center of the worship unto Jehovah (Joshua 8:1). The ark of the covenant was there. Somehow, the people had gotten the idea that if the ark was physically present with them, that they were invincible. They were not faithful to the Lord in their conduct and service, but they had the "magical" ark, so they would prevail in battle against the Philistines.

They were wrong about that. It was at Shiloh where the ark of the covenant had been captured by the Philistines and the unfaithful people of Israel defeated (1 Samuel 4:10-11). It was as if they believed that the ark was like a lamp and God was a genie inside enslaved to whoever possessed the ark. That was certainly a mistake.

Jeremiah warns that God would do likewise with Jerusalem and the temple- (Jeremiah 7:13-15). That is, just as He had withdrawn His protection from Shiloh and allowed the ark to be captured, He would withdraw His protection from the temple and allow it to be captured as well. This because of Judah's failure to heed His prophets - (vs. 13).



## **Similar False Trust Today**

Could we have a false trust as "members" of the church which Christ built? Are some like the Judeans who cried "The Temple of the Lord..." but did not give themselves fully and loyally to the Lord and His service? There may be those who cry "The Church of Christ..." behaving as if membership will cover over negligence and inactivity. It may be that some think as long as they are members of a faithful church that they are secure. But the Bible says that judgment begins with the household of God (1 Peter 4:17) and the parable of the tares also tells us that such attitudes are misguided (Matthew 13:41-43).

The fact is, salvation is dependent on individual faith and loyalty, not by the crowd with whom we may be associated. While it is true that our associates may have an effect on what kind of character we develop, each one of us will be judged as an individuals and not by group allegiance or association! - "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Do some, like the Judeans, who disobeyed God, then claimed exemption, do likewise today? Living in and of the world part of the time, and then going to "church"? Do we find ourselves participating in worldliness in our manner of speech, conduct and/or style of dress but think of ourselves as being "faithful members" because we "go to church" the way they went to the temple?

Today, as then, God is a God of grace, but his grace instructs us to live holy (Titus 2:11,12). There is no sacrifice made for those who willfully transgress God's law (Hebrews 10:23-31). Salvation is dependent upon God's grace, not church ritual!

The Lord's responded to the folly of such a false trust: As they were once told, "Remember Shiloh!" let us "Remember Sardis!" (Revelation 3:1-6). They had "a living name", but that did not free them from the threat of condemnation - (vss. 1-3). As always, salvation was based on individual consecration (vss. 4-6).

To the folly of such a false trust we could also answer: "Remember Laodicea!" (Revelation 3:14-22). They had become "lukewarm" - (vss.

14,15). They were in danger of expulsion because of worldliness - (vss. 16,17 ). They were in need of repentance; full and complete repentance. ( vss. 18-22 ).

Like Judah whose salvation from destruction depended upon wholehearted service to God, so our salvation depends on complete and faithful obedience to the will of Christ! We must avoid the fallacy of "virtue by association", and remember that God has promised to do to us just as He did to Israel if we are not faithful - (see Romans 11:20-22). This is a call to personal commitment and endeavor. It is not enough to be associated with the faithful... each of us must become one of God's faithful.

*Note: Many thanks to my friend Mark Copeland for doing a sermon outline upon which many of the thoughts in this article are based*

***The Greatest Encouragement to the Christian***  
***(Romans 8:1-39)***  
***By Ethan R. Longhenry***

One of the responsibilities of the Christian in his life's walk is the need to constantly keep the "big picture" in mind. If one loses sight of the grand truths given to us, that Christ died for our sins, that we can be justified by His blood, that we have the fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and that He will bring us home to heaven, and gets lost in the daily grind of resisting sin and temptation and keeping the light shining, one may easily fall into those temptations and lose heart. In order to remain secure and to keep fighting the good fight of faith, we must constantly encourage ourselves and one another and remember the greater good and glory that is uniquely ours. To that end Romans the eighth chapter is perhaps the greatest encouragement that we can receive. Let us now examine this chapter and gain the encouragement we so desperately need.

Romans 8:1-13:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled

in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace: because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you. So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Paul begins this section with a contrast from the discussion in Romans 7:14-25, where he speaks of the "law of sin" within the body and how it leads to sinfulness and subsequent death. This hypothetical situation, going back to the time in every person's life where sin was served and not God, is reversed by believing in Christ and obedience to the law of the Spirit (Romans 8:1-2). While there is only condemnation for those who obey the lusts of the flesh, for those who obey Jesus Christ there can be no condemnation.

Paul then speaks about Christ and the fulfillment of the law, a discussion interwoven throughout the letter. Since the law was weak-- in the sense that mankind, a fallible creature of flesh, was commanded to obey it, but could in fact not do so-- God sent His Son to condemn sin by living a perfect life as a man, and this bringing forth the promised new covenant with a new prophet (Deuteronomy 18:18-22, Jeremiah 31:31-34). This covenant was to be spiritual, not physical, and therefore represented the end of the law of sin and the flesh and the emergence of the law of the Spirit.

Romans 8:5-13 is thus a discussion of the contrasts between those who live by the flesh and those who live by the Spirit. Those who live by the Spirit are after the things of the Spirit, having put away the desires of the flesh and the death contained therein, and live anew in Christ perpetually. Those who live according to the flesh, however, do not live for God but in fact against God, and they live in constant friction and enmity against God. Their end is

only condemnation, but those who live by the Spirit have the Spirit within them and will live.

Romans 8:14-17:

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.*

Paul now concludes his discussion of how we live by and are led by the Spirit with the grand truth that those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God, freed from the bondage of sin and now adopted by God as sons. This was not possible under the old covenant. The Hebrew author explains how the Israelites entered the presence of God in Hebrews 9:2-7:

For there was a tabernacle prepared, the first, wherein were the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the Holy place. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holy of holies; having a golden altar of incense, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and above it cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat; of which things we cannot now speak severally. Now these things having been thus prepared, the priests go in continually into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the services; but into the second the high priest alone, once in the year, not without blood, which he offereth for himself, and for the errors of the people.

In this covenant only one man-- the High Priest-- was able to enter the presence of God, and that only on one day a year. The rest of the Levites had to be content in the Holy Place, and the rest of the Israelites even further from the presence of God. To us as Christians, however, the ability has been given to enter the very presence of God since we are in fellowship with Him according to 1 John 1:3:

*that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

We are not only able to enter His presence in prayer, praise, and worship thanks to our fellowship with Him, but we are able to call out to Him as "Abba, Father." Abba is an Aramaic word that signifies the most intimate relation between a child and his father; the English word "daddy" perhaps can bring the sense of it. I am by no means asserting that we ought to call upon our God by using the term "daddy," for proper respect and reverence ought to be given to the Most High. It does teach us, however, that our relationship with our God and Father is most special and very close, and we should be in constant wonderment and joy that we have been given the ability to be so close to the Creator of all things.

Paul continues to affirm our relationship with God and Christ by establishing that as we are led by the Spirit and the Spirit witnesses with our own spirits that we are children of God and therefore co-heirs with Christ. This does not mean, as some have speculated, that we are equal heirs with Christ; if a person dies and he gives to one a million dollars and another a thousand both people are "co-heirs," but their reward is not necessarily equal. Although we may not be equal heirs with Christ, nevertheless our inheritance will be far better than we could ever imagine, for we will have the opportunity to be in the presence of our God and Father and His Son Jesus Christ. For this we constantly strive and suffer all the day long, as Paul continues, for if we are to reach the glory of Christ we must first suffer as He did also.

Romans 8:18-25:

*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For in hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

Paul continues with his discussion of the glory that is to come and the momentary suffering that is before it. Romans 8:18 is an excellent memory verse and ought to be often on our tongue when we find ourselves worn down by constant temptation and suffering, for no matter how hard it may be, it will not compare to the glory that awaits. Although I have never personally gone through such a trial, I have been told that a woman will soon forget the pain and suffering of pregnancy and labor when she holds her child who beams back at her. The glory of her child has caused her to forget-- or minimize-- the pain and suffering she previously went through. So too shall we see our sufferings: they may be bad now, but soon enough, on the other side of the glory land, we will account them as nothing compared to the glory of Heaven.

The rest of the passage-- verses 19 through 25-- speak of the groanings of the creation and of mankind for the deliverance from sin. Although this deliverance will result in the destruction of all physical matter (2 Peter 3:8-10), the entire creation waits with fervent desire to be so purged from the stain of sin and death which has marked and scarred the creation since the expulsion from the Garden. We as Christians, who have the "firstfruits of the Spirit," also groan for the same redemption from sin and death which we find in Christ Jesus and will come to pass on the last day (Acts 17:30-31). We constantly hope this very thing since we have not seen it, and Paul here in verses 24-25 does for hope what 1 Corinthians 13 does for love and Hebrews 11:1 does for faith: provide the proper definition. Our hope is our belief in that which we have not seen but constantly desire to realize. This hope will only be fulfilled when we stand in the presence of Christ; at this moment our faith will be vindicated and love will triumph at last.

I wish to avoid the contention and strife generated by any discussion of Romans 8:26-30, the discussion of the role of the Spirit, for while it contains glorious news it is also somewhat tangential to our current discussion. Therefore, let us now examine Romans 8:31-39:

*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or*

*persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written,*

*"For thy sake we are killed all the day long;  
We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter."*

*Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

This grand conclusion ought to stir our hearts and confirm us mightily in the Lord. Paul asks rhetorically in verse 31 what the conclusions of these things-- the fact that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, that we are considered sons of God and thus co-heirs with Christ, that through our present sufferings we will reach the glory of the presence of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ at the final revelation of the latter-- are to be. The conclusion is, simply, if God is for us, who can be against us? If God was willing to give up even His own Son for us, what would He refrain from giving us? If God is judge, and we are not to be condemned, we are to live and be justified. Christ, who sacrificed Himself for us and was resurrected, being both God and man, now mediates for us in Heaven. With such powerful allies, what can we possibly fear from the feeble powers of the earth and of evil? Can the sword separate us from Christ? Famine? There is no power that can break through the mighty hand of God, and no amount of force can change the grace manifest to us through His sacrifice and resurrection. Even if we are killed all the day long, our strength and resources poured out, and left for nothing, we still overcome through Christ and we still are in the love of Christ. As Paul establishes forcefully, no power on earth, below the earth, from times past or times future, no thing whatsoever can separate us from the love of Christ. The Christian must conquer.

There is one thing, however, that Paul does not mention in this list, and this has proven to be a stumbling-block to our Protestant friends who believe Romans 8:31-39 proves that the Christian cannot fall from grace. While it certainly remains true that no external force can separate us from the love of Christ, we can separate ourselves from the love of Christ. There is nothing that Christ can do for a heart that will not hear and lives in open rebellion against God. The unrepentant person must die in his sins (Matthew 12:31-

32); there is no forgiveness for this. This wonderful security and salvation, therefore, cannot exist for the one who never obeys Christ or the one who ceases to obey Him; they are lost in their sins unless they come-- or return-- to the truth. No temptation can separate you from the love of Christ; no immorality and ungodliness surrounding you has that power. You alone in your spirit make the decision whether you will accept the love of Christ and live or reject it and perish.

The picture has been made for us. We were lost in our sins, following the law of the flesh and in danger of death eternally. We, through whatever means, found Christ, or perhaps Christ found us. If we obey Him, be led by the Spirit with the Spirit in us, we are accounted as sons of God and therefore co-heirs with Christ, and we must suffer so that we may as Christ ascend to glory. This suffering, however, cannot and will not compare to the glory that will be revealed, that wonderful glory that the entire creation pines for in agony. And because of all this we are to have no concern, for if God is assuredly for us, no power will be strong enough to overcome us. No thing-- no suffering, no temptation, no person or place or action or event, either now, before, or in the future-- will be able to separate us from Christ our Lord. This is true as long as we remain in obedience to Him, for He can do nothing for us if we choose to refuse Him. Let us be encouraged and strive to maintain humble hearts, accepting correction, running the race and overcoming any and all obstacles that may beset us, and constantly keep before us the reason for all these things and the hope that we desire to have fulfilled: the glory of Heaven and the reward of being in the presence of the Father and the Son. Let us diligently work, as the Hebrew author charges us in Hebrews 4:1-11, that we may enter that holy Sabbath of God, Heaven.

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Topic Page:

## **More Than Teaching Bobby K. Thompson**

**It is very difficult to overemphasize the value of teaching the truth to an individual.** The very heart of the religion that Jesus presents to the world



rests upon teaching. One is drawn to Christ through instruction. “No one can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.” (John 6:44-45). As the passage clearly states, the drawing is not one of a miraculous process, but through a person being taught and learning of God. Where teaching has not been administered, drawing power has not been administered. In the great commission according to Matthew, Jesus pointed to teaching as a prerequisite of being saved and continued teaching of the saved regarding all things that Jesus had for them to observe. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. A-men.” (Matthew 28:19-20).

**We need teaching and we need a great deal of it.** It might be truthfully said that no one outgrows the need for teaching. On occasions, we say of some one that by the actions of that person it is evident that the individual needs teaching. I would suppose that all of us at one time or another have made such a statement. It could possibly be that the thing responsible for the person failing God was not in the lack of teaching, but a failure to manifest in their lives what is to accompany or follow teaching. There are those who have been taught. They can relate God’s instructions or His will toward them. They need something more than teaching. **THEY POSSIBLY NEED:**

**To apply the teaching to themselves.** So many hear the word, but they never seem to apply it to their own lives. Teaching that is of profit must be applied. When the Bereans were taught the word, “..they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so.” (Acts 17:11). Jesus condemned the Scribes and Pharisees for failing to make proper application to themselves. (Matthew 23:29-33). We need to examine our hearts with what is being taught. (II Corinthians 13:5).

**Obedience to the truth that is taught.** To be obedient to Christ, one must be taught what Christ expects in obedience. However, one may be taught and never obey the truth. There are those who stubbornly defy what the truth directs them to believe and do. Jesus said of some: “For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their

ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. (Matthew 13:15). Effort had been made to instruct these people that they might obey the truth. They needed to open their hearts to the truth taught and conform their lives to the precious word of God. Teaching had been exerted upon them. They weren't lacking in being taught. They lacked, as so many lack today, obedience to what had been taught them. James calls upon us to be more than hearers. We are to be doers of the word. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (James 1:22-25). There is certainly no profit in hearing only! Those who were baptized on Pentecost day in Acts 2 were those "that gladly received His word." (Acts 2:41). We need an obedient reception of the truth that has been taught us.

**Conviction for the truth taught.** Conviction requires courage and effort. It is not by following the course of least resistance. The failure of some is not due to a lack of teaching. It stems back to a lack of conviction for the truth that they have been taught. One may be able to quote the Bible from Genesis through Revelation, but what good is it to his soul salvation if he doesn't make an application of it to himself in obeying the truth and having enough conviction to stand for it in love? Paul said with conviction: "...I am set for the defense of the gospel." (Philippians 1:17). He wasn't sitting on the fence. He was set for a DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL. It is highly possible that individuals excuse themselves and others for their lack of convictions by saying that they need teaching. If one means that they need teaching to develop convictions, we find no particular argument with that conclusion. However, there are some who have been taught the truth from their youth that have no convictions for it. May we never minimize teaching! We need more and more teaching, but may we also appreciate the fact that there are other factors and principles that must accompany and follow teaching.

*Susquehanna Sentinel, Feb 5, 2006, Marietta, PA*

## **Plan of Salvation**

### **The Plan of Salvation**

## By Jon W. Quinn

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### *Plan #1*

Announced by the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to new believers in Christ who asked what they must do:

"Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."  
(ACTS 2:38)

### *Plan #2*

On the back page of a tract, sinners were urged to pray this prayer to be saved. This prayer is not found in the Bible; nor were alien sinners commanded to pray for their forgiveness.

### **The Sinner's Prayer:**

"O' Lord, I accept that I am a sinner and that Jesus died for my sins. I now accept Him into my heart as Lord and Savior asking for your mercy and forgiveness in His name. Amen."

The editors of Expository Files are happy with plan #1 and thankful to the God of all grace for it. We cannot recommend Plan #2 at all, but will change our minds when this prayer can be shown to us in the Bible.

### ***The Final Page A Prepared Heart By Jon W. Quinn***

The Scriptures say, "And Ezra prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." (Ezra 7:10). This verse is actually a summary of Ezra's life and purpose. He was determined to fully accept the Lord's direction in life. This desire came from deep conviction and reverence for God. This led Ezra to seek out the Lord's will in His revealed Word, the Scriptures.

Some complain that the Lord's will is too difficult to understand. But others, like Ezra, have had no problem in understanding it. There is a whole list of just plain, regular folks in Rom. 16 who all understood it quite well. Timothy is said to have understood it from a child.

The fact is, Jesus said that some would never understand. But it was not because of a lack of ability but rather a lack of will. They have unprepared hearts. To understand, Jesus insisted that one must desire to have God in his or her life. He or she must be willing to open eyes, ears and heart.

The parable of the sower sowing seed is a case in point, well illustrating how important it is for us to prepare our hearts to understand and receive the words of Christ (Matt. 13:3-9; 18-23). One who is unwilling will often complain it is just too difficult to understand, but Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." (John 14:15).

In dealing with a rebellious people, the Lord chose Isaiah to be His prophet. Through Isaiah, Jehovah charged, "I called, but you did not answer; I spoke, but you did not hear." (Isa. 65:12). These people had turned their backs on God, and the more alienated they became the more their nation's problems grew until finally their nation fell.

They did not answer God's call. It is important for us to understand that God still calls today; not through prophets like Isaiah but through the gospel of Jesus Christ, His Son. The Scriptures affirm that God "called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. 2:14). Answering this call means bringing our lives into harmony with the teachings of the gospel; to "walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory." (1 Thess. 2:12).

We do not know what the future holds for our own nation today. We can continue to ignore God's call and slide into tragic defeat just the way Isaiah's people did long ago. Or, we can remember our foundation and reclaim it. Though none of us as individuals can decide for our nation, we each can decide for ourselves to answer the call of God. Prepare your heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to share with others the Lord's statutes and judgments.