

Expository Files

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Edited by Jon W. Quinn & Warren E. Berkley

The Master I Choose

Front Page 14:12

By Jon W. Quinn

The Psalmist asked the question of the Lord, “What is man that Thou dost take thought of him?” (Psa. 8:4). Even though the Bible was written over a period of 1500 years, its teachings are consistent about the nature and identity of the human being. Human philosophies underwent drastic changes and revision, but the Scriptures always taught the same things because its ultimate Author is God.

The Bible teaches that a human being is created with two parts: body and spirit (Gen. 2:7; Zech 12:1). From the beginning the Bible lets us know that we each one are responsible for all of our choices and that we are capable of making moral decisions. This is one of the things that sets us apart from all other of earth’s creatures. We are created in God’s image.

The Bible also shows that there is a constant appeal made to the hearts of men and women from two opposite directions. One is from God and the other is from Satan. The more we listen to one, the dimmer the other becomes, but in every human heart there is a struggle until the battle for that heart is won by one side or the other; but it is up to the individual as to who will carry the day. God appeals to our best qualities; love, dignity and nobility, while Satan appeals to our lusts, greed and pride.

Each one of us makes the decision as to who will be our lord. God will abide by our decision: He forces no one to walk faithfully. He will also insure that Satan must abide by our choice as well. We will spend eternity with the Master we choose.

The Teacher Teaches Us to Pray
Matthew 6:9-13
By Jon W. Quinn

It is an amazing thing to think about. We have all heard teachers and preachers tell us about God. Some are accurate and some not when they speak to us about these matters. But Jesus, God in the flesh, is unique as a teacher. His teaching was special because it was the word of God, not just words of men about God. Jesus came to tell us directly what God expects of us. We'll look specifically at His teaching on prayer. Consider the "Lord's Prayer" (Matthew 6:9-13).

Our Father

"Our Father who art in heaven" (Matthew 6:9). Jesus teaches that God loves us and provides for us in a similar way to a loving parent (see also Matthew 7:7-11). There are two senses of Godly Fatherhood:

(1) Our origin is through Him and we bear His image by creation. (Genesis 1:26,27; Acts 17:28).

(2) Fallen in sin, we become part of His spiritual family by spiritual rebirth (John 3:3-5; 1:12,13).

Jesus also teaches that God, the Father, is in heaven. That is where His throne is. We can only begin to imagine the beauty, wonder and majesty of that heavenly sphere, but if we are faithful, the day will come when we will not have to use our imaginations (Revelation 4:5; 5:6; 7:15-17).

Also, we are taught to be reverent as we address God in prayer. "Hallowed (or "holy") be Thy name" God's name is to be placed in a separate category from all other names. It is distinct; it is His alone. He is above all others (Isaiah 57:17).

The Kingdom

“Thy Kingdom Come” (Matthew 6:10). It is not a physical, earthly kingdom that Jesus is praying about, though it is fine to pray for our nation and its rulers. But the kingdom of God is a different kind of kingdom. Jesus refused to have any part of being an earthly king (John 6:15; 18:36).

Instead, He came to establish a spiritual kingdom. (Acts 8:12; Colossians 1:13). It was Divinely ordained to be established in the first century, and it was (Mark 9:1).

Those who are looking for Jesus to come and set up an earthly kingdom are mistaken, just as much as those who were looking for such a kingdom back in the first century. Wherever men and women obey the good news, or gospel of the kingdom, they are submitting to King Jesus and become citizens of His spiritual kingdom. One day, He will return to take His kingdom home to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:23-26).

The Will of God

“Thy will be done” (Matthew 6:10). Jesus had, and taught us to have, the utmost respect for God's will. His will must take precedence even over our own wills. A good example of this attitude was displayed by Jesus as He faced the cross. His prayer acknowledged the precedence of the Father's will over His own will in the garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39).

It is easy to say, “I really, really want God's will to be done” but those who really want it to be done are active in making it happen! It would be a rather empty prayer to pray “Thy will be done... but let someone else do it, not me!” (John 12:27,28).

God's Care

“Give us this day our daily bread.” (Matthew 6:11). This part of Jesus' prayer shows us that it is appropriate to call upon God for our physical needs. Not only our bread, but all of our physical necessities; our health, shelter, and so forth.

But like many other things, we must act in faith to advance that for which we pray, and trust in God as we do so. It would be wrong to tempt God by jumping off a building as we ask for good health. (Matthew 4:5-7).

Also, to pray for our daily bread but then to fail to do what God says we need to do to secure it shows a lack of faith (Ephesians 4:28) Good things come to us from God (1 Timothy 4:4-6).

Forgiveness

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Matthew 6:12). After the prayer, Jesus explains that it is necessary to be forgiving in order to receive forgiveness from God (Matthew 6:14,15).

In a remarkable example of being eager to forgive, Jesus prayed that God might forgive those who crucified Him even as the very deed was being done (Luke 23:34)!. This prayer was answered for some of them when they later obeyed the gospel - and that was exactly what Jesus wanted for them (Acts 2:36-38).

Spiritual Guidance

“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. (Matthew. 6:13). It may seem peculiar to ask God not to lead us into temptation. He wouldn't tempt us with evil (James 1:13). So what does this mean?

It is simply to acknowledge a God who delivers from evil and to keep us from situations which might prove to be too much for us to handle. We can be sure that God will do this for His people who live by faith (Matthew 26:40,41; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Peter 2:9).

Conclusion

“[For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.]“ (Matthew 6:13b). The kingdom belongs to God. Power and glory are His as well, today and tomorrow and forever. We see the Master teacher who proclaimed the glory and power of God. For those who want to see Jesus, they will find the answers to life and its purpose. Eternity is coming, and to be in God's kingdom, saved by His power, and to ever share in His glory is as noble an ambition as we can have, and there is no greater blessing.

A Body You Have Prepared For Me

Hebrews 10:5-7

By Allen Dvorak

The high priest washed his body in water in preparation for putting on his holy linen garments. It was the Day of Atonement and he would enter the Most Holy Place, into the very presence of God to offer blood on behalf of the people. Entering the tabernacle, he placed a censer with burning coals and sweet incense behind the veil that separated the two rooms of the tabernacle to create a cloud of incense before he entered the Holy of Holies (Most Holy Place).

In the course of this annual ritual, a ram would be offered as a burnt offering and the high priest would bring the blood of a bull and then a goat into the Most Holy Place and sprinkle that blood on the mercy seat. He would also sprinkle blood on the altar in the tabernacle courtyard. The bull was offered for the sins of the high priest and his family to make atonement; the goat was offered on behalf of the nation as a whole for their atonement (read Leviticus 16 for a more detailed description of this sacrificial ritual).

God commanded the people of Israel to observe this ritual and so, year after year, the blood of bulls and goats was shed and sprinkled for the atonement of sins. Yet, the Hebrews writer states quite clearly that “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins” (10:4). He argues that if these sacrifices could have indeed purified the worshippers, there would have been no further need to offer them again the next year! Why, then, did God command that these sacrifices be made?

Although the Levitical sacrifices were intended to teach man about the seriousness of sin and the cost of forgiveness, the contrast between the copy and shadow of the heavenly things (Hebrews 8:5) and the heavenly things themselves is striking. As High Priest of the good things to come, Jesus did not come into a tabernacle made by men’s hands, repeatedly with the blood of bulls and goats like the high priests of old (Hebrews 9:11-12). Instead, He offered Himself once at the end of the ages for the purpose of putting away sin and entered into heaven itself to appear in the presence of God on our behalf (Hebrews 9:24-26).

The ineffectual nature of animal sacrifices necessitated the incarnation of the Son of God. This is the argument of the Hebrews writer in chapter 10 as he ascribes the words of Psalm 40:6-8 to the Son of God.

David, the author of Psalm 40, began his psalm with a thanksgiving song for the Lord's help (vs. 1-3), but he also noted, in the section of the psalm quoted in Hebrews, the importance of obedience rather than ritual sacrifice. One is reminded of Samuel's comments to king Saul on the occasion of his disobedience to the Lord's command to utterly destroy the Amalekites. Saul claimed that the animals were saved for sacrifice to the Lord. Samuel responded, "Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *and* to heed than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22).

There is something interesting, however, about the quotation in Hebrews 10:5-7. Compare the quotation as it appears in Hebrews 10 with the passage in Psalm 40 in our Old Testament.

"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come -- In the volume of the book it is written of Me - - To do Your will, O God.'" (Hebrews 10:5-7)

Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book *it is* written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law *is* within my heart." (Psalm 40:6-8)

The second phrase in the quotation in Hebrews is different from the reading of the Old Testament in our English Bibles because the Hebrews writer actually quotes from the Septuagint (our English Bibles, by contrast, are translated from Massoretic texts).

Lightfoot, in his commentary Jesus Christ Today, wrote, "The words, **a body has thou prepared for me**, follow the Septuagint, in keeping with the usual preference of the author. The Hebrew text, however, literally reads, 'ears hast thou digged for me,' which apparently means that God has given man ears to hear that he might obey Him. The Septuagint translators dealt freely with the text by substituting the whole ('body') for the part ('ears'), resulting in the meaning that instead of God equipping man with ears, He made or prepared for man a body" (185).

Of course, the Hebrew text used by the Septuagint translators was actually somewhat older than that used by the translators of our English Old

Testament. A possible explanation for the difference in quotations (besides the view that the Septuagint translators “dealt freely with the text”) is that the text used by the Septuagint translators was not only older, but actually a more accurate text.

Whether the Septuagint translators were “free” in their translation or simply working from a different Hebrew text, Robert Milligan offers an intriguing perspective on the difference in the two quotations. He wrote in his commentary, “To the careless and superficial reader, there may at first seem to be no connection between digging out, or thoroughly opening the ears of any one, and providing a body for him. But the thoughtful reader will at once see that, in the case of Christ, the two expressions are nearly equivalent, and that the latter differs from the former chiefly in this: that it is rather more specific and expressive. To dig out the ears of a person means simply to make him a willing and obedient servant (Ex. xxi.6). But in order to so qualify Christ as to make him a fit servant for the redemption of mankind, a body was absolutely necessary. Without this, there could have been no adequate sacrifice for sin, and without an adequate sacrifice, there could have no suitable atonement, and without an atonement, the claims of Divine Justice could not have been satisfied, and without this, the will of God could never have been accomplished in the redemption of mankind” (269-270).

Milligan’s comment seems to fit well with the context of Hebrews 10 as the author notes that by the will of God “we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (vs. 10).

Although God commanded animals sacrifices (“which are offered according to the law” – vs. 8), the ultimate will of God was that a perfect life be offered to replace the one forfeited by every sinner. It was therefore necessary for the Son of God to take on human flesh, to have a human body, so that He could do the will of the Father, i.e., offer Himself for our redemption.

In conclusion, the Hebrews writer took a passage from David which spoke about the desire to do the will of God and applied it specifically to the case of Jesus. In His case, doing the will of God required a body to be sacrificed!

Orthopraxy (Jas. 1:22-2:26)

Warren E. Berkley

Here's a word you didn't use last week: *Orthopraxy*. The first thing you may see in the term is the familiar prefix, *ortho*. That is about what is correct or straight. To correct your dental arrangement, you visit an Orthodontist. His work is to correct the alignment of teeth. In religious use, you may know the word orthodoxy: correct doctrine. *Orthopraxy* refers to correct practice.

For Christians, our orthodoxy is not something we produce, negotiate or revise. Our commitment is, correct teaching has been given. Through Jesus and His apostles, the New Testament came into existence. That's our complete resource and it might be said – when we express our belief in the teachings of the New Testament and deliver those teachings to others, we are involved in biblical orthodoxy.

We cannot stop with orthodoxy. There must be **orthopraxy**. That occurs when we use the teachings of the New Testament in our lives on a daily basis. We cannot please God, honor Christ or be effective disciples in the world as long as there is an absence of orthopraxy! **Both teaching and practice must find good, wholehearted combination, if we are to be the kind of people the gospel calls us to be.**

Or as James said, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves,” and “So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty,” (Jas. 1:22, 2:12).

The Powerful Word Of God, Heb. 4:12

Jim McDonald

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joint and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. And, there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:12f).

This declaration of the power of God's word follows on the heels of the writer's exhortation: *“Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience” (Heb. 4:11).*

Inasmuch as the next verse begins with the word “*for;*” the exhortation in verse eleven and the declaration of God’s powerful word in verses twelve and thirteen are related. Just what is the connection between these passages? There are three couplets which are difficult to interpret. “*Soul and spirit*” demonstrates this difficulty. Sometimes the words are interchanged for one another. Solomon wrote, “*Then shall the body return unto the dust as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it*” and James said, “*he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall cover a multitude of sins*” and while each of these is a different word (Solomon, “*spirit;*” James, “*soul;*” Ecc. 12:7; James 5:20); both had the same idea. Yet, there is a difference between “*soul*” and “*spirit.*” Sometimes the word “*soul*” is used to describe the physical part of man (1 Pet. 3:20) while “*spirit*” refers to the spiritual part of man. It is equally difficult to distinguish between “*joint*” and “*marrow,*” but there is a difference as physicians well know.

There is also distinction between “*thoughts*” and “*intents*” of the heart. Thoughts enter one’s heart by the windows or lamp of the heart, the eyes. Jesus said, “*The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy body shall be full of light. But, if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness ...*” (Mt. 6:22f). Jesus said, “*everyone that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart*” (Mt. 5:28). Think ye that thoughts of committing adultery with Potiphar’s wife entered into Joseph’s heart (Gen. 39:7-12)? Doubtless so, but he weighed that thought and rejected it. He thought it; he did not intend it.

But, just how does God’s word, a dividing sword, discern the thoughts and intents of the heart? God is the great heart searcher. “*I try the reins of the heart,*” He said, (Jer. 11:20). In the Hebrews passage he reminds us that “*there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight*” (4:12). His word enters the heart, and He, before whom “*all things are naked and laid open,*” sees how that heart reacts to His word which has entered it. Thus the connection between the exhortation and His word: don’t follow the same example of disobedience as ancient Israel in the wilderness; which disobedience was the natural consequences of their unbelief. Does He who has “*searched us and knows us*” see the unbelief in the heart before it becomes open rebellion, disobedience? You know that He does!

Jim McDonald

See more of Jim's work at <http://www.lawofliberty.com>

He Needed a Faithful Father
Topical Page
By Jon W. Quinn

After the death of Solomon in 930 B.C., the kingdom divided. The northern tribes rebelled against the house of David and established a new nation which continued to be called "Israel". The southern kingdom continued to acknowledge the authority of the house of David; they were called "Judah".

It all happened during the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. The split of the nation into two smaller nations left both much weaker. We often refer to Rehoboam's bad decision to follow the counsel of his young friends rather than that of the wiser counselors of his father as the reason for the division of the nation. And it is true that Rehoboam is responsible for his decision and the consequences of it, but it was not there that the division had begun. The wheels had been set in motion during the reign of his father, Solomon.

The Division of the Kingdom Had Been Prophesied

God had spoken to Solomon and told him of consequences that would result if he became an unfaithful king. The Lord said, "As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, even to do according to all that I have commanded you, and will keep My statutes and My ordinances, then I will establish your royal throne as I covenanted with your father David, saying, "You shall not lack a man to be ruler in Israel.' But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will uproot you from My land which I have given you, and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples." (2 Chronicles 7:17-20).

Also, the prophet Ahijah had prophesied to Jeroboam "He said to Jeroboam, 'Take for yourself ten pieces; for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, "Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and give

you ten tribes (but he will have one tribe, for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel), because they have forsaken Me, and have worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the sons of Ammon; and they have not walked in My ways, doing what is right in My sight and observing My statutes and My ordinances, as his father David did. Nevertheless I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, but I will make him ruler all the days of his life, for the sake of My servant David whom I chose, who observed My commandments and My statutes; but I will take the kingdom from his son's hand and give it to you, even ten tribes. (1 Kings 11:31-35).

The Ultimate Cause of the Division Was Solomon's Apostasy

Two independent kingdoms were formed. Jeroboam was king over Israel (10 tribes) in the North (1 Kings 12:20) and Rehoboam was king over Judah and Benjamin in the South (1 Kings 12:21).

While we understand that Rehoboam was not simply an innocent bystander, we see that his reign is adversely effected by his father's spiritual failures. This did not make Rehoboam not responsible for his own decisions, he was (1 Kings 11:9-13). But the actions and attitudes of his father adversely effected Rehoboam.

Solomon was a very wise man. He was a good governor and the nation prospered under him. But during the middle of his reign, he began to compromise his faith and convictions. His many political marriages undertaken to cement alliances with other nations brought great influence upon him from his pagan wives, and they influenced him to turn to idolatry. It was in that failure that the seeds of division had been sown.

Parents will effect their children's future, and Rehoboam, though responsible for his own errors, needed faithful parents to look up to. Rehoboam did not get that from his father Solomon. I do not know how to make the message any plainer than that.

Will We Effect Our Children As Badly as Solomon Effected His?

I doubt that Solomon planned on having such an adverse effect on his son. His moral and spiritual failures slipped up on him. That happens when

proper attention is not given to the Lord and his will in our lives. Solomon had given such matters their proper place at one time, but somewhere along the he had lost his way (1 Kings 11:9-13).

Why did Rehoboam listen to the unwise counsel of his friends to increase the tax burdens of the people (1 Kings 12:9-11) instead of the wise counsel of his father's counselors and decrease the tax burden (1 Kings 12:6-8) (any similarity between this and modern day political issues in our own nation are purely coincidental). Was it pride? Was it a lack of respect of his father, perhaps due to his father's own spiritual failures? Whatever it was, the end result was the same. National disaster and civil war.

So that was then, and now is now. We fill the roles of parents and children. We are now the ones living our lives before God. It is our children who are being influenced by us. They are seeing in us examples of strong faith and commitment, or spiritual weakness and failure. The Bible says, "For He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should teach them to their children, that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell them to their children, that they should put their confidence in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." (Psalm 78:5-7).

In the New Testament we read, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4). We also read of the good effect godly parents (and grandparents) can have on their offspring. Paul wrote to Timothy, "You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.: (2 Timothy 3:14,15; cf. 2 Timothy 1:5).

Parents! Will we live for the Lord as the examples of faith we ought to be before our children and all, or will we conceal the wonderful things God's grace has provided us in compromise and neglect? "We will not conceal them from their children, But tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done." (Psalm 78:4). Let us prepare our hearts and be faithful to our God! "And not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that

did not prepare its heart and whose spirit was not faithful to God.” (Psalm 78:8). It does not take a “Solomon” to clearly see what our choice ought to be.

Plan of Salvation

By Jon W. Quinn

Plan #1

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

Acts 2:36-38

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ -- this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

(Acts 2:36-38).

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.

Final Page

Our Contact With His Death *Warren E. Berkley*

Preparing a sermon recently about *Jesus & People*, something came to mind about the death of Christ; specifically, our contact with that history.

First, we know this. There was a necessity about the death of Christ to save sinners built into God's plan that can be best reckoned with by seeing what the Old Testament taught about atonement, about the penalty for sin being paid.

When we read the gospel accounts of the imprisonment, torture and execution of Jesus, we need to turn out thoughts with the deepest reverence to what He was willing to do for people, and then make it personal. He was stripped naked, flogged, spat on, struck in the face, subjected to mockery, pain and death - - all of that indignity He endured, **so that you and I could be forgiven of lying, or evil thoughts, or any other kind of disobedience to God.**

Now to the thought I had about our contact with this truth. You can watch scores of movies and hear the songs of the season all you want, perhaps to some benefit. **There is nothing as powerful as reading what God has said about the death of Christ through the Scriptures.** No movie maker can do a better job than the Holy Spirit. No orchestra or composer can move us like the words written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. No forensic/medical expert can describe it better than those men who were there and who were inspired by the Spirit to tell the story.

“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

*“Who committed no sin,
Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;*

who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” *1 Pet. 2:22-25*

