

Expository Files

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Front Page

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In Due Season We Shall Reap **By Jon W. Quinn**

It was Peter, James and John that went up the mountain with Jesus. They were overwhelmed by what they saw and heard that day. It was awesome in every sense of the word. We use the word “awesome” a lot. Even about things that are not awesome; like a football game or a movie or a car. But those things are not awesome. They might be interesting or exciting or even surprising. But here is awesome: Consider Matthew 17:2 ; 5-6 ; “And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified. “

Now, why did these three men fall on the ground like that? Was it because they had the utmost respect for Jesus as believers? No! Anyone would have felt similarly. Suppose it had not been Peter, James & John with Jesus, but rather Herod, or Pilate, or even Caesar. Would these ungodly men have felt no awe? I suggest they would have been overcome with awe and with terror as well.

There will be nothing but awe when we see the glorified Son of God at the last moment of this universe’s existence. This awe will not fill the hearts of only believers and disciples, but also the unbeliever, the doubter, the

hypocrite, the blasphemer, the mocker. No tough guys that day! There will be awe and terror on the part of some, and awe and joy on the part of others. Let Jesus be your Lord and Savior. Let that final moment be one of victory. Obey His gospel and live for Him. Your eternal blessings are waiting.

Full Of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom
(Acts 6:1-6)
By Jon W. Quinn

Men and women of good character are needed for the church to do its work. There were seven men of such exemplary character in the early church at Jerusalem. They were selected by the brethren to serve the local church in a special way. Two of these men began preaching the gospel. They preached the same gospel, but the results of their preaching were different. Consider:

Seven Chosen To Serve (Acts 6:1-6)

The number of disciples in Jerusalem was growing rapidly. Greek speaking Jews believed their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of benevolent aid (vs. 1). To fix this problem, the apostles called the whole church together and told them it was not desirable for them to leave their work to serve tables (vs. 2). The apostles wanted to be able to devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word (vs. 4).

So the apostles told the disciples to choose seven men "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" whom they could appoint over this business (vs. 3). This pleased the disciples and they chose seven such men. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. When the seven were presented to the church and the apostles prayed and laid their hands on them, appointing them to the task.

It is interesting and revealing that problems arose so quickly in the new church. But it is not so surprising. There was a varied group of people trying to meld into one body. They were having to learn patience and brotherly consideration and tolerance. One lesson that ought to be clear is this: problems that arise in the church must be dealt with quickly. Murmuring can destroy fellowship. Fair and righteous solutions must be sought (1 Corinthians 6:4,5; Philippians 2:3-5).

Also, the church needs to exercise care in choosing those that will serve. Those with proven character, faith and commitment should be given responsibility accordingly; those without such should be given time, opportunity and encouragement to develop their characters in a godly way.

Stephen (Acts 6:8-8:2)

Following the laying on of the apostles' hands, Stephen is said to have performed great wonders and signs among the people (Acts 6:8). After some time, apparently rather short, those from the synagogue of the Freedmen disputed with Stephen, but they could not resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which Stephen spoke (Acts 6:9,10). These Jews secretly induced men to accuse Stephen of speaking blasphemy against Moses and God. They accused him of speaking against the temple and the law, saying that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the temple and change the customs of Moses. This was not true, of course, but it had also been a charge made against Jesus.

Stephen was seized and brought before the Council (Acts 6:12). Stephen answered the charges by reviewing Jewish history (7:1-53). He discussed Abraham (vss. 1-8), Joseph (vss. 9-16), Moses (vss. 17-44) and Joshua, David and Solomon (vss. 45-50).

Then, Stephen brought the lesson home. After talking of the persecution and mistreatment of the ancient prophets by the people, he condemned the Council by saying, "You are doing the same things your ancestors did." (Acts 7:51-53).

The Council members were cut to the heart. They gnashed at him with their teeth, stopped their ears, ran at him with one accord, cast him out of the city, and stoned him to death.

As he was being murdered, Stephen said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." and "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." (vss. 55-60), How similar these two requests are to the ones Jesus made to the Father as He was being crucified. Stephen died and was buried by devout men (8:2).

Men cannot really defeat the wisdom of God's word. They can ignore it, mock it, refuse to listen, and hate those who speak it; but man has no good

answer to it nor a good alternative with which to replace it (Isaiah 55:8,9; 1 Corinthians 1:18-21,25).

False accusations are weapons used by the enemies of God's people. It happens often. If and when such happens to you... follow heaven's advice: first, keep your behavior excellent among the unbelievers (1 Peter 2:11-12); second, do not fear their intimidation but set up Jesus as Lord of your heart and prepare yourself to give good and righteous answers for your faith (1 Peter 3:14-16) ; and glorify God in the name "Christian" (1 Peter 4:16).

Philip (Acts 8; 21:8,9)

Philip, another of the seven, preached and performed miracles in Samaria (Acts 8:5-8). It was there that Simon the sorcerer and the Samaritans believed and were baptized (vss. 9-13). Peter and John came to Samaria and laid hands on them so that the Samaritans could receive the Holy Spirit as Philip had received Him back in Jerusalem (vss. 14-17). This was necessary because Philip was not an apostle and so could not pass on the gifts himself.

After this, Philip was sent by an angel to meet an Ethiopian nobleman. He preached Jesus to him and baptized him (vss. 26-40). Then, Philip was "caught away" and was found in Azotus. He preached in the cities until he came to Caesarea (vss. 39-40). Many years later, Paul stayed with Philip in Caesarea. At this time, Philip had four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:8,9).

Like Stephen and Philip, we must teach others the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20). This was a common attribute among faithful and growing Christians in the first century. Also. Note that if we preach the same gospel that Philip did, we will preach baptism in Christ (Acts 8:12; 36-39; cf. Acts 2:38).

Stephen felt his faith was worth dying for. Philip felt his faith was worth living for. They are both right... faith is worth living for and dying for. Stephen faced his final hour's ordeal with confidence and hope because of what he had found in Jesus. Philip lived his life with the same degree of confidence. Faithful children of God share this same confidence with these early brethren. Is this living hope yours today as well?

What 1 Corinthians 10:13 Teaches About Temptation
(1 Corinthians 10:13)
By John David Powlas

To better understand the teachings of 1 Corinthians 10:13 [NKJV] about temptation, we need to think about its great truths...

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man” – No person except Jesus Christ has ever faced any unique temptations – He was the unique Son of God (Matthew 4:1-11)! The temptations that we encounter are the same kinds which trouble other human beings (1 Peter 5:8-9).

“but God is faithful” – God does not lie; He always tells the truth (Numbers 23:18-19). He, therefore, always keeps all of His promises (Deuteronomy 7:9-10). That faithfulness includes what is stated in this verse about us being able to overcome temptation!

“who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able” – God has set limits on the power of Satan in tempting us (Psalms 103:11-14; Job 1:6-2:10). Therefore, Satan cannot set any temptation before us which is impossible for us to resist.

“but with the temptation will also make the way of escape” – We need to remember that God is smarter and stronger than Satan (1 John 4:4). Hence, no matter what Satan uses to tempt us, God provides an “escape route” so that we can avoid giving in to that temptation (2 Peter 2:4-9).

“that you may be able to bear it” – With God's help, it is possible for us to “bear” [bear up under; endure] every temptation sent by Satan. Jesus Christ certainly did (John 8:29; Hebrews 4:14-16)!

1 Corinthians 10:13 is a wonderful promise about overcoming temptation! Such help from God is one of the many spiritual blessings available to all who are “in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). Are you included in that blessed number (Galatians 3:26-27)?

True Religion Defined (Colossians 3)

Warren E. Berkley

Passages like the third chapter of Colossians should always be read with a heightened sense of self-examination.

The point of your reading and study shouldn't simply be, "do I understand this?" The point is, "am I living like this?" "Have I really started this way of life, and am I following through as God intends?" If I'm deficient in meeting the standard of this instruction, my sense of respect for God should compel me to repent and renew my commitment.

One way to study Colossians three is, **true religion is defined here.** Not exhaustively but in good essence. Not everything that pertains to pure and undefiled religion is revealed in this chapter. But what is revealed here can help us fix our thoughts on what true religion is. {I'm using the word "religion" to mean, **man's appropriate response to God.**}

True Religion Starts By Being Raised With Christ: "If then you have been raised with Christ." Paul is addressing Christians; people who had been baptized into Christ and thus "raised with Christ," (see this explained in Rom. 6:4).

True Religion Starts When The Penitent Believer is baptized into Christ; that's how you are "raised with Him." You can't just say, "I'm a Christian." You have to become one! And the only way you can become a Christian is following the instructions given in the Scriptures. Those who are "raised with Christ," are those who have been baptized into Him, in sincere and life-changing response to the gospel.

True Religion Seeks The Things Above: "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

Remember, this passage is addressed to *those who have been raised with Christ: Christians*. Two words can help us get this: **Seek** and **Set**. SEEK the things that are above. SET your mind on things that are above.

Here's a conclusion it might be tempting to jump to: **Because of what this says, I must think only of heaven and God, all the time - without any other thoughts; nothing about what goes on here on the earth.** That kind of thinking has a name: Monasticism. That's a religious philosophy that places all the emphasis on being alone; secluded, separated from everybody and everything.

Ancient monasticism – during a certain era – involved monks, going to a monastery, vowing silence, little contact with each other; fasting; virtually against marriage or social relationships. That extreme kind of thinking was justified by referring to passages like this: *The monks thought they were doing this; seeking the things above, and setting their minds on the things above.*

Examples of real people in the New Testament completely dispel this notion. Jesus lived with people, honored marriage and family and taught His disciples to seek the lost and serve each other. The early Christians we read about in the book of Acts spent a great deal of time together, helped each other and worked at jobs. There is no monk in the New Testament. There are faithful, obedient Christians, engaged in their respective duties and influencing people as a light shining in a dark place. So this passage in Colossians is not about, and does not confirm the classic monastic lifestyle.

This is about the ambition and affection of your mind; this is about your heart, your focus, your priority as you are engaged with others in the world, and assuming all your responsibilities, while being mindful of God and thoughtful of spiritual things.

The truly righteous person has a heart that is directed toward heavenly things **but not neglectful of people, or legitimate responsibilities on earth.** The opposite of this is captured by the phrase Paul used over in Phil. 3:19 – **minding earthly things.** Or, his expression in Romans 8 about “the mind of the flesh.”

There are so many people around us who illustrate this. No thought of God, of Christ, of heaven. No clear mental perspective about eternity. They just

get up everyday and get all absorbed in this world . . . conforming to it . . . falling in love with it . . . And the sad part of that is – they are doomed to disappointment (see 1 Jno. 2:15-17).

Where is your mind? What is the ambition and affection of your mind? True religion – as described in the Bible – means seeking the things above; setting your mind on the things above. You do things on this earth, but with a heart that is filled with heaven’s claim and promises.

True Religion Seeks To Destroy Sin: “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth...” There is nothing more pathetic or apparent than hypocrisy. For somebody to claim to be a Christian – then in their conduct, show contempt for all that is holy; for people to boast of their baptism, implying – that’s all that’s necessary – is like wearing a sign that says, “I’m a hypocrite.” I think people must not realize how transparent they are. Some people – perhaps – just don’t get it about discipleship; genuine discipleship that is heart-rooted and life-changing.

In the Bible the person who embraces true religion – who is raised with Christ into fellowship with God – **holds dear the sacred duty to live godly and that means, not only verbal but personal opposition to sin (see the strong language of Jesus, Matt. 5:29-30).**

This expression, “put to death,” is a dramatic statement about the commitment of everyone who has been raised with Christ. It literally means **to kill**. This is a place where killing is righteous. Kill sin; the older translations say, “mortify.” We ought to be a people who are **out to kill** when it comes to sin. Some of the targets are:

Sexual immorality
Impurity
Passion
Evil desire
Covetousness, which is idolatry
Sinful anger, wrath, malice
Slander
Obscene talk out of your mouth

We need to go hunting. We need to be clear about the targets and kill these things. And this is personal; this is individual. I understand there is a sense

in which we collectively fight against sin. But in this passage, this is our personal battle. It says, “Do not lie to one another.” That’s how I kill dishonesty.

And as I engage in this battle against sin in my life I am rejecting the old self and putting on the new man, “which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”

True religion – biblical religion – use the word “Christianity” if you are comfortable with your understanding of that, must always be about our opposition to sin personally. And one motivation is – as written by Paul in verse 6 – **on account of these things, the wrath of God is coming.**

Are you seeking the things above, where Christ is, at the right hand of God? As one risen with Christ, through baptism, are you putting to death what is earthly? True Religion is a discipline of life made possible by Jesus Christ whom we serve.

A Warning to Rich People Like Us By Jacob Hudgins

“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Tim 6:17)

What comes to mind when you think of rich people? A finely dressed man? An enormous, extravagant house? Large staff of servants? Cars? Jewelry? This image may be the reason that Bible warnings to the rich so often go unheeded. The Christian in 21st century America is remarkably wealthy. Even if we have but a little by American standards, we have far more than most in our world—and would put the people of Bible times to shame. So it is to people like us that God warns: *“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God”*(1 Tim 6:17). Let us consider this warning—one given to rich people like us.

Paul is instructing Timothy of what he should teach various members of the church in Ephesus, and he tells him to command the *“rich in this present age not to be haughty”*(v. 17). The word “haughty” here is also translated

“highminded”(KJV) and “conceited”(ESV); God is warning us first against the natural tendency to let our wealth go to our heads. The implicit deceit of wealth is that those who have it are better people than those who are not. This is not new. When Jesus warned that “*it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God*”(Matt 19:24), the apostles were astonished, wondering who could be saved. James warned of Christians treating rich people better than poor, giving them attention and honor (James 2:1-5). Jesus’ story about the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) is perhaps most groundbreaking because it shows a beggar as the hero—while the rich man is tormented! The biblical view of riches is that they are at best an obstacle to overcome in our quest for heaven—certainly not something to be haughty about! Of course God gives us all things that we have (James 1:17), so we must view our wealth as a stewardship given to us, to be used in the most effective way before returned to the master. The warning is not to be haughty—not to think we have earned what we have, that we are better than others because we have it, or that it will last very long.

Further, the rich should be taught not “*to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God*”(1 Tim 6:17). One pitfall of wealth is the façade of security and happiness it brings. Our vocabulary is full of words like “safety net” and “nest egg” that belie a reliance on money to save us in difficult times. Yet Paul reminds us that riches are “*uncertain*” and are not worthy of our trust. Ask wise (and rich) Solomon. He will remind you of the emptiness of riches: “*He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver*”(Eccl 5:11). He will tell you about how fleeting they are: “*Riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away like an eagle toward heaven*”(Prov 23:5). But most of all, he will remind you of what we all know: “*As he came from his mother’s womb, naked shall he return, to go as he came*”(Eccl 5:15). When the stock market collapses, or the dollar dives, or our nation is defeated in war, what will you do? Does that possibility terrify you? Trust “*in the living God*” and you will be fine through it all. Trust in riches and you will be miserable now and at the end. Woe to us if God should say, “*Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided*”(Luke 12:20).

But what should rich people do with their money? “*Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life*”(1 Tim 6:18-19). There is good to be done, and much of it can

be done with the wealth God has given us. Please observe that this is not good financial planning, physically speaking. Spending our money on helping others and doing good is not on the world's priority list, but it must be on ours. Christians in the first century "*sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need*"(Acts 2:45). They worked, but not just so they could have more than enough for themselves: "*Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need*"(Eph 4:28). Listen further to John: "*But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?*"(1 John 3:17). Being rich in good works is not the same of thinking of good things to do but failing to do them. It is not achieved by simply caring for people. Its accomplishment does not rest on wishing there was something we could do to help. In the last day, Jesus will not be impressed by our bank statement, but by whether we used His things to help His people (Matt 25:31-46). Do you pass that test?

God has warned us strongly. Will we listen? Do not dismiss this passage as addressed to millionaire athletes or Fortune 500 CEOs. While it applies to them, it is a warning to rich people like us. Refuse to be haughty, remembering that all you have was given to you. Place firm trust in God, so that when the money fails, you will not falter. Be rich in good works, meeting the needs of others—and lay up your treasures in heaven.

The Bible's Format and Organization

Topical Page

By Jon W. Quinn

There are several things that are necessary to understand the Bible. We need to approach the Bible with the right motive. Developing a general knowledge of the Bible is important in understanding particular passages.

It is also helpful to note how the Bible is organized if we are to better understand its message. As an example, a dictionary would be quite difficult to use if one had never learned it was organized alphabetically. I might know it was a book that told me the definitions of words, but I'd be hard pressed to look up a word if I had never caught on to its being alphabetically arranged.

In many ways, the Bible is written like any other book. But in other ways, it is very much unlike them. One of the ways it is unlike any other book is the

length of time and the manner in which it has come into existence. This led to its being organized in a way that may seem a little strange and confusing.

If you pick up a book of history, you generally read it through from earlier periods to later periods. If it were a history of our own nation, Chapter one might be about The voyage of Columbus while chapter six might be about the Revolutionary War with Great Britain. But the Bible is not generally laid out in strict chronological order. If you read the Bible “from cover to cover” you will not read it chronologically. (i.e. you won't read of Job until after Moses, but he probably lived before. You'll read of King Hezekiah way before you read the book of Isaiah, but they lived at the same time. You'll read about the birth of Christ, the death of Christ, and then the birth of Christ again. The epistles are not in chronological order. While individual sections of the Bible are in chronological order (i.e. the book of Genesis, the book of Acts) the whole Bible is not.

How The Delivery of God's Word Effected the Bible's Organization

The Book is from God (1 Peter 1:20,21; 2 Timothy 3:16,17). God delivered His word through the centuries of inspiration and employed various means of delivery. (Hebrews 1:1-3). In fact, the Bible is not really a single book, but a collection of sixty-six books. At one time, these were all separate books, all recognized as Scripture, but not under a single book cover or in a single scroll (Luke 4:14-19).

The whole centuries long delivery process was completed before all the Scriptures were brought together under one cover.

To combine the whole work in progress during the Old Testament period was impossible.. or at least not expedient. Such a huge scroll would have been difficult to use. But some of the separate works were brought together. The first five books were combined and referred to as “The Law”, all written by Moses. Sometimes these are called “The Pentateuch” . The books of poetry were all combined under the heading “the Psalms.” There were also “the prophets” and the histories. Jesus refers to some of these groupings (Luke 24:44).

As men compiled all Scripture under one cover (which only became feasible when books with pages and bindings began to replace scrolls), they had to

add these books in some order. Early compilations did not all share the same order, though all of them put the books of Moses first.

Organization

So, what would be the order of the books? The modern Hebrew Bible: (No NT books of course) is arranged this way:

LAW - first 5 books
PROPHETS - Former prophets: Joshua,
Judges, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings
LATTER PROPHETS: Isaiah, Jeremiah,
Ezekiel, The book of the 12
WRITINGS - Psalms, Proverbs, Job,
Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations,
Eccl. Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah,
1&2 Chronicles.

Though the order is different, these are precisely the same books as in our OT (non catholic versions). Neither the Hebrew Bible nor the “Christian Bible” is in chronological order, but books are grouped according to type. Our Bibles are arranged this way:

Old Testament

LAW - first 5 books
12 BOOKS OF HISTORY (Joshua to Esther)
5 BOOKS OF POETRY (Job, Psalms,
Proverbs, Eccl, Song of Solomon)
PROPHETS - major prophets (Isaiah Jeremiah,
Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel)
12 minor prophets

New Testament

HISTORY - gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke,
John
HISTORY OF EARLY CHURCH - Acts
EPISTLES - Paul's to churches
Paul's to individuals
Hebrews
Minor Epistles (James, Peter,
John, Jude)

PROPHECY - Revelation

Understanding the Bible Order

While there is great benefit in reading the Bible through (becoming more generally familiar with it) that is not a good way to come to an understanding of a particular topic. If I wanted to study baptism, and started with Genesis and read the Bible through, in one Bible I have I would have read 1208 pages before coming to the first mention of the word. This would be sort of like wanting to know the definition of the word “trouble” and picking up a dictionary and start reading with the “a’s”. A part of being a good workman is to learn how to use his tools (2 Timothy 2:15). A carpenter needs to know which end of the hammer to use to drive a nail, and which to use when pulling one.

Subject Matter

If I wanted to study repentance, I need to know that the information I need is not found in just one verse, or chapter, or book. The information is not progressive (i.e. simple things about repentance do not appear on early pages, then more complex issues later.) We must not isolate a passage from the rest. We must look at repentance in light of all the Bible says about it.

An understanding of how the Bible is organized will help us in searching out truth within its pages. The Bible was written by inspiration of about forty individuals over a period of about fifteen hundred years. These writers discussed topics and events as they happened according to the present need. The Old Testament dealt with its present circumstances and foretold of the coming of a Savior. The New Testament tells us He has arrived and accomplished His task. Because of that, we can use the word of God to extend to the world the gracious invitation of Christ: He said, “Come to me.” He has told us how to do so. By all means, take Him up on it.

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:

"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 15.4

When You Rely Only

On The Word of God...

Warren E. Berkley

1. It is not necessary to agonize over the doubts that always accompany human intuition. If you simply listen to others talk about the Bible and do a little superficial reading, mixed in with the assumptions of your heritage and the intuition of your present circumstance, there will always be lingering doubts; never strong conviction. The solution is, read to learn and learn to live the Word of God (Psa. 119:9-16). Strength comes by the Word of God

abiding in you (1 Jno. 2:14). Get the Bible off the shelf, into your head and life!

2. It is not necessary to qualify some man to trust in. Through informal and subtle means, we may qualify certain men, let them study and blindly accept their pronouncements. “Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help,” (Psa. 146:3). “Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keep truth forever,” (Psa. 146:5,6). “Let God be true...,” (Rom. 3:4). The people of Berea had it right (Acts 17:11).

3. It is not necessary to adopt a pre-formulated and fluid creedal, institutionalized religion. If you are willing to do the work, to read the Word of God and abide in it, it is not necessary (and in fact wrong) to find your place among existing religious denominations and offerings of men. *Think in terms of finding your way to God through Christ, as taught in the Word.* Comparative religious studies often become an exercise of simply comparing human history and doctrine. Go back to the source. The Word is sufficient and profitable “for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,” (2 Tim. 3:16,17). The word of God lives and abides beyond all the changing revisions of human creeds, and stands wholly above every one of them whether written or unwritten (1 Pet. 1:23).

4. It is not necessary to fall under the influence of your emotions or the emotions of others. As human beings, there is certainly an emotional component to our make-up. The role of emotions is not to guide us! Our emotions along with the emotions of others has no authoritative role. But when we submit to divine authority, one **result** will be the emotion of joy. “Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help,” (Psa. 146:5). We must accept God’s help first (by the obedience of faith), then the happy state of joy results as we continue to walk by faith (see also, Acts 8:39; Gal. 5:22).