



Seek The Old Paths

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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TWENTY PROOFS FOR THE DEITY OF CHRIST

Jason Hilburn

1. It was against God's Law to worship anyone but God (Exod. 20:3-5; Deut. 6:13-14; 2 Kings 17:35; Matt. 4:10); therefore, either Christ is divine, or Christ sinned by accepting worship on many occasions (Matt. 2:11; 8:2; 9:18; 28:9,17; cf. Acts 12:23; Heb. 4:15; Rev. 22:8-9). We know Christ never sinned (Heb. 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22), so it must have been God's will for Jesus to be worshiped. In fact, God the Father commanded the angels to worship Jesus at His birth (Heb. 1:6)! Although Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and angels all refused to be worshiped because they knew that would be wrong, Christ did not (Acts 10:25-26; 14:12-18; Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9).

2. Jesus forgave men's sins while He was on earth, and the Jews said, *“Who can forgive sins, but God alone”* (Luke 5:20-21)?

3. Jesus was “equal with God” in His glorious form before He became a man (Phil. 2:5-8).

4. When Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, the Jews rightfully understood that Jesus was claiming to be divine, like His Father (John 5:18).

5. In Exodus 3:14-15 God said, *“I AM THAT I AM”* ... YHWH [Yahweh / Jehovah GOD]. That is God's name, which implies His eternal self-existence. Jesus said, *“if ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins”* (John 8:24). In John 8:58, *“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM.”* The Jews understood what Jesus implied and sought to kill Him for it. YHWH God is the I AM (Exod. 3:14-15); Jesus is the I AM (John 8:24,58); therefore,

Jesus is divine, eternally existent. The Father and Son are both eternally existent Beings, so they can both be called YHWH (existing one, e.g., “I AM”), although they are not the same Person. An earthly father and son may wear the same name, but that does not mean they are the same person.

6. YHWH was repeatedly called the Rock who took care of His people (Deut. 32:3-4; 1 Sam 2:2; 2 Sam 22:32; Psa. 18:46); and Paul called Christ the Rock who followed the Israelites and helped them (1 Cor. 10:4; cf. Exod. 17:6).

7. Exodus 13:21 says YHWH was in the pillar, and Paul says it was Christ who was with the Israelites (1 Cor. 10:4).

8. Psalm 102 states that YHWH laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of His hands (102:21, 25-27). The Hebrews writer applies that passage to Jesus (Heb. 1:10-12).

9. Isaiah saw YHWH (Isa. 6:5), but no man hath seen God (the Father) at any time (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12). John said Isaiah saw Jesus (YHWH) in His glory (John 12:41).

10. Christ was called “Emmanuel,” which literally means “God with us,” and Christ is often referred to as “God” in the Scriptures (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; John 1:1,14; 20:28; Acts 20:28; Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 3:15-16; Titus 2:13; Heb. 1:8).

11. YHWH was called a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense (Isa. 8:13-14), but Paul directly applied this to Jesus (Rom. 9:33; 10:9-11).

12. Isaiah said the Messiah would be called *“the Mighty God”* (Isa. 9:6). When Jesus claimed to be the Messiah (John 4:25-26), He was claiming to be “the Mighty God.”

13. John was preparing the way for YHWH (Isa. 40:3; Matt. 3:3). John was preparing the way for Jesus; therefore, Jesus is called YHWH. John referred to Jesus as the one coming after him. John was preparing the way for Jesus by baptizing, and Christ would later command people to be baptized for the remission of sins (John 1:23; 29-31; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). John went before Christ, who is here described as the Lord their God: *“And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord”* (Luke 1:16-17; cf. John 20:28).

14. “The first and the last” is YHWH (Isa. 41:4; 44:6), and Jesus repeatedly referred to Himself as *“the first and the last”* (Rev. 1:11, 17-18; 2:8; 22:12-13, 16).

15. YHWH said He would not share His glory with another (Isa. 42:8); yet the Father shares His glory with His divine Son (John 17:1,5; Heb. 1:3; Rev. 5:12).

16. YHWH says every knee will bow to Him (Isa. 45:21-23), but every knee will bow before Jesus on the Day

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Deity of Christ...



Editorial...

QUESTIONS ABOUT WATER BAPTISM

Garland M. Robinson

Second Peter 1:3 says, “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” Since we have been given ALL THINGS that pertain to life and godliness, there is nothing more to learn from any other source. There is nothing more the Holy Spirit could reveal. All things necessary for one to become a Christian, live a faithful Christian life and go to heaven, is found in the New Testament. Here’s the point: If someone gives us more than what we have in the New Testament, they are giving us too much (adding to). If they give us less than what we have in the New Testament, they are not giving us enough (taking from). If they give us exactly what the 27 books reveal, it’s not needed because we already have it.

The Scriptures forbid “adding to” or “taking from” what the Bible says. There are grave warnings against changing the Scriptures at the beginning of the Bible (Deut. 4:2), in the middle of the Bible (Prov. 30:6) and at the end of the Bible (Rev. 22:18-19).

Many attempt to “explain away” water baptism saying it is a “work,” and since man is not saved by works (Eph. 2:8), water baptism can’t have anything to do with being saved.

Answer: Water baptism is a work, in the sense that it is an action that is performed. But, it is not man’s work, it’s God’s work (even “faith” is a work, John 6:29). Baptism is the work (action) that God commands man to do. Man did not come up with the idea of water baptism. God did. Man does not trust in water baptism. Man trusts in God who gave the command to be baptized (Mark 16:16).

Everything man does is a “work.” Hearing, believing, repenting, confessing, being baptized are all works man MUST DO in order to be saved. Man

“acts” (works) in each one. If man does not act, he cannot and will not be saved. After becoming a Christian, studying the Scriptures, worshipping, being faithful, everything man does in obedience to God, are all works. Each of these are things man MUST DO to continue being saved.

We need to understand there are different “kinds” of works that we read about in the New Testament. There are works that do not save and there are works that do save. For example, works that do not save are works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21), works of darkness (Rom. 13:12), works of the law of Moses (Gal. 2:16), etc. Works that do save are the works God commands man to do. These are works of faith, works of obedience (John 6:28-29; James 2:14-27). Man did not conceive of, nor design these works. God designed them. They are works of faith, submission, obedience to God.

Both Paul and James use Abraham to illustrate an example of saving faith. In Romans 4:1-16, Paul speaks of Abraham being saved by “faith” and not by “works.” The works under consideration in Romans 4 are works of “merit” whereby Abraham would have placed God in his debt. Man is not saved by works of “merit” — works by which we “earn” salvation. Man will never earn salvation, no matter how much he works.

In Romans 4, Paul does not address “works of faith.” Works of faith are works God commands man to do. Even then, we do not trust in the works themselves, we trust in God who gave us the work to do.

In **Romans 4**, Paul reveals **HOW** Abraham was saved. “*For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*” He was saved by “faith” (by grace through faith, Eph. 2:8). **James chapter 2** uses the same example of Abraham being saved, except he reveals **WHEN** Abraham was saved. It was **when he obeyed God** by offering Isaac on the altar. “*But wilt thou know,*

O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, WHEN he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:17-24).

There is no contradiction between Paul and James. Paul is speaking about works of merit and James is speaking about works of faith. There are steps of faith. Romans 4:12 speaks of those who “*...walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham...*” To walk in Abraham’s steps is to walk in obedience (James 2:21).

“Some say we are a new creation and that it is not of works (Eph. 2:8-10).”

Answer: We are a new creation (person) AFTER becoming a Christian, not before. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*” Notice the words, “if any man be IN Christ.” We are a new person IN Christ, not OUT of Christ. Sinners are OUT of Christ. When they are ready to obey the Gospel in *Believing* (John 8:24), *Repenting* (Luke 2:38), *Confessing* (Rom. 10:10), they will be *baptized* INTO Christ (Rom. 6:3; Acts 22:16). Therefore, Christians are IN Christ. There are many things we read about that are IN Christ. For example: 1) Redemption of sins is IN Christ (Rom. 3:24); 2) The sanctified are IN Christ (1 Cor. 1:2); 3) Salvation is IN Christ (2 Tim. 2:10); 4) We’re not condemned if we are IN Christ (Rom. 8:1).

As a sinner, there are two logical questions one would ask: 1) Since salvation is IN Christ, HOW can I get INTO Christ; and 2) Since salvation is IN Christ, WHEN do I get INTO Christ? There are only two verses in the New Testament that answers these two questions: Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27. Romans 6:3 tells HOW we get into Christ — “*Know ye not, that so many of us as were BAPTIZED INTO Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*” Galatians 3:27 tells WHEN

we get into Christ — *“For as many of you as have been BAPTIZED INTO Christ have put on Christ.”*

HOW does one get INTO Christ, by being baptized. WHEN does one get INTO Christ, when he is baptized. There are no passages that say one Believes into Christ. There are no passages that say one Repents into Christ. There are no passages that say one Confesses into Christ. But two passages say one is baptized into Christ.

There are works of man’s obedience to God (John 6:28-29; James 2:14-27). These are not man’s works, they are God’s works. These are works God commands man to DO — man must OBEY God. For example, Abraham was justified by “works” WHEN he offered Isaac on the altar (James 2:21). Rahab was justified by “works” WHEN she received the spies and sent them out another way (James 2:25).

It is interesting that Romans 4:1-16 tells about Abraham being saved by “faith” and not by “works” (vs.2,4). But, the works spoken of here are works of “merit”, not works of “faith.” Works of faith are the works we do that God commands us to do.

Salvation is by both “faith” and “works” (obedient faith). Our obedience (works) proves our faith (James 2:18,22). Our faith makes the works (obedience) we do valid. Works are not valid without being done by faith and faith is not valid without being proven by works. BUT, these works are not works of merit, they are works God commands we do.

Observe these four verses that prove that “faith alone” or “faith only” is dead, barren, useless, invalid, void. Notice especially James 2:24 where it says, *“by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”* This is the only time “faith only” is found in the Bible and it says NOT by faith only.

James 2:17, *“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”*

James 2:20, *“But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”*

James 2:24, *“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”*

James 2:26, *“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”*

FAITHFULNESS BRINGS VICTORY

Alan Gauger

May we always be ready, willing, and able to do the work that’s needed in the Lord’s kingdom. May we always strive to look for opportunities to proclaim the Gospel, the good news, with those around us.

In Revelation chapters 2 and 3, Jesus is addressing the seven churches of Asia. In verse 10 of chapter 2, he’s dealing specifically with the church at **Smyrna**. He said, *“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast [some] of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life”* (Rev. 2:10). The faithfulness under consideration here was required in light of severe persecution. As a matter of fact, keeping it in the proper context, what he was actually telling them was to be faithful up to and including, if need be, a death of martyrdom for what they believed. He would give them a crown — eternal life, the glory of which is beyond man’s ability to describe.

Someone comes along and says, “I am so thankful we live in a day and time when there is no persecution for fidelity to Christ.” However, do you remember what the apostle Paul told Timothy? *“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”* (2 Tim. 3:12). Human need has not changed since the transgression of Adam. The attitude of the world remains exactly the same towards the inerrant, unbending, unchanging truth of Jesus Christ. The question that may need to be asked by some is this. Is it possible that I may have backed off just a bit to be more acceptable to the general populous, and maybe because of that, I don’t suffer persecution?

Jesus made the following statement while delivering what is often referred to as the sermon on the mount, *“Blessed are ye, when [men] shall revile you, and persecute [you], and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great [is] your reward in heaven: for so persecuted*

they the prophets which were before you” (Matt. 5:11-12). He also said, *“Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets”* (Luke 6:26). As a matter of fact, when you advance three verses in Revelation 2, to the letter to the church in **Pergamum**, you will observe he commends their fidelity, even in the face of the death of Antipas *“my faithful martyr; who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth”* (Rev. 2:13).

Even in the midst of idolatry, immorality, and ungodliness, Antipas maintained his fidelity to the Lord and continued to be faithful. Are we like Antipas? Can the Lord commend our lives?

Faithfulness in all aspects of one’s life is essential in order to reach heaven someday.

I want to mention three very important areas in which we must strive to be faithful.

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD OF GOD

In the book of Proverbs, we read, *“Every word of God [is] pure: he [is] a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar”* (Prov. 30:5-6). Not only is every word of God tried, but every word of God is written. The sum total of divine revelation is inspired, totally authoritative, and is written down. Paul mentions this fact when writing to Timothy, *“All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”* (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

We also read of what was said of the Bereans, *“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scrip-*

tures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

We should have that same attitude towards examining the Scriptures as those Bereans did. The truth says to you exactly what it says to me. What God has said in one place is in perfect harmony with what he has said in another place. It is the sum of his commandments that comprise the truth. Jesus said, “...If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32). Paul wrote, “Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ” (Eph. 3:4).

Paul mentions the fact that we are to study God’s word when he wrote, “Study (ASV, give diligence) to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing (ASV, handling aright) the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

The apostle Peter wrote, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11). We are to speak as the oracles of God. We need to continually examine, in light of God’s word, what others say. That is the only true measure or guide we have.

The Word of God is certainly powerful. The writer of Hebrews mentions that fact when he wrote, “For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). It is indeed a living word. And, according to Luke 8:11, it is the seed of the kingdom.

Do you remember Paul’s instructions to Timothy? “I charge [thee] therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away [their] ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to

be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:1-8).

At all times, and in every situation, the word of God must be preached in its simplicity, in its completeness, and in its purity, without any addition, subtraction, alteration, or substitution (cf. Rev. 22:18-19).

FAITHFUL IN OUR SERVICE TO THE LORD

Jesus said, “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed [is] that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing” (Matt. 24:45-46).

Paul wrote, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:1-2).

It’s also interesting what the Lord says regarding the matter of service. “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt. 6:24).

God commands total commitment. That’s a requirement. Now if we are not careful, we can get involved in too many things. There’s certainly nothing wrong with being involved. God’s people are involved and productive and that’s great. But remember in the book of Ecclesiastes where Solomon mentions things which mankind (then and now) considers to be of highest value: power, wealth, worldly wisdom, and pleasure. He basically described those things as one hugging the wind when he said, “Vanity of vanities, ...all [is] vanity” (Eccl. 12:8). Listen to him as he concludes near the end of that chapter, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl. 12:13).

What is our purpose in this life? Well, when you stop to think about it in a practical way, none of us brought anything with us into this world, nor will we be able to take anything when we leave here (1 Tim. 6:7). It was here when we arrived and it belongs to the Lord.

FAITHFUL IN OUR STEWARDSHIP

Paul wrote, “Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2). The faithful steward continually seeks to implement, to improve, to increase his talents. In Matthew chapter 25 he deals with the unexpected nature of his return and also stewardship when he delivers the parable of the ten virgins and the parable of the talents. Regarding the latter, he discusses the 5 talent, 2 talent, and 1 talent man. Both the 5 talent man and 2 talent man went out and doubled their talents. But the 1 talent man did not gain other talents but simply kept what he had in safe-keeping. When their master returned, they all had to give an account of the talents they had been given. The joyous response to both the 5 talent and 2 talent man was the same “well done thou good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:21,23). However, the 1 talent man was given a different response entirely because he had done nothing with his talent. The scripture says he was afraid and hid his 1 talent. The Lord’s response to him was, “thou wicked and slothful servant ... Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 25:26,30).

We need to remember the mission of the church was not given simply to evangelists, but was given to Christians, all of whom, are evangelists or heralds of truth. And, by our lives, we need to demonstrate its value and gain an audience with our neighbor. May we always be ready, willing, and able to do the work that’s needed in the Lord’s kingdom. May we always strive to look for opportunities to proclaim the Gospel, the good news, with those around us.

Only those who are faithful unto death will indeed receive that crown of life, that eternal home in heaven. Faithfulness to the end brings victory.

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"EARTH 101"

As I was doing some preparation for a class on the book of Job, I came across a brief video presentation on the web site of National Geographic. The title was "Earth 101." Not surprisingly, the message of the video promotes Organic Evolution and leaves God out of any explanation of the earth's origin and maintenance.

In the video's early portion, this statement is made: "Earth – the only planet known to maintain life, a product of scientific phenomena and sheer chance. Approximately 4.5 billion years ago, the earth formed from particles left over from the creation of our sun. Gravity drew these particles together to form pebbles, which then formed boulders, and eventually, the earth" [www.nationalgeographic.com].

How does that information harmonize with the teaching of the Bible? God's word is truth (John 17:17), and that which contradicts it is not truthful.

The National Geographic video contains: fantasy, fable, folly, falsehood, foolishness. First of all, it is wrong when it portrays the earth and/or life as being "the product of scientific phenomena and sheer chance." The Lord God created all things in six days (Exodus 20:11). The laws and arrangements which He put in place in the natural world were scientifically sound, but the origin of our planet and life cannot be explained using mere natural/scientific processes. In addition, the earth and life sure enough did not come about by "sheer chance." Chance had nothing to do with it! "Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood still" (Psalm 33:8,9). God basically said, "Let it happen," and it did.

"Earth 101" declares that the earth was formed about 4.5 billion years ago. We are reminded of God's questions to Job after He had spoken about some of the various aspects of the material universe. God asked Job, "Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? Or because the number of thy days is great" (Job 38:21)? Just as Job was not around to observe the earth's beginning, neither were the folks who made the "Earth 101" video.

Contrary to what is stated in many forums, the earth is not billions of years old. When one examines the information found in biblical chronologies, coupled with archaeological findings and accurate historical records of the past few thousand years, the conclusion is that our earth is in the neighborhood of six to ten thousand years old. From our day, back to Jesus' time on earth, was about 2,000 years. From Jesus back to Abraham was around 2,000 years. And, from Abraham back to Adam was also in the ballpark of 2,000 years. That does not allow for billions of years.

According to "Earth 101," our earth was formed "from particles left over from the creation of our sun." That makes it sound like things go back to the sun, does it not? Well, that raises this question: "How did that big old sun get here?" It certainly did not exist eternally. It had a beginning. The National Geographic pulls the sun out of somebody's pocket, so to speak, and starts with the sun. No can do, my friend. There must be an adequate explanation for the sun's origin! Why not accept God's explanation? "For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God" (Heb. 3:4).

Again, the video points to gravity as the factor which pulled leftover particles together to form pebbles, which formed boulders, which formed the earth. We ask: How did gravity makes its way into the mix? Was it sheer chance, or was it planned? The reality is, gravity, like all other natural laws which keep the universe going, were put in place by God, and He continues to uphold all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3).

Did you notice something that is missing in the video's claims? They speak about our earth *maintaining* life, but they do not touch on the subject of how life *came about*. The furthest back they trace things is the sun. Here is an undeniable fact: the material sun did not produce life. No leftover particles from the sun's formation can turn into life, either. It is not possible that a material sun, material particles, material pebbles, material boulders, and a material earth can produce mammals with male and female gender. Material "stuff" cannot produce a human brain

which builds space stations, and they cannot produce human hearts which pump blood throughout our bodies to keep us on the go. No, a materialistic approach to the universe and humanity just will not do. We were fearfully and wonderfully made by Jehovah (Psalm 139:14).

Brethren, do not "buy into" something just because a once-reputable organization says it. Do not accept something just because a person with an educational degree claims it. For sure, do not swallow it just because it is on the internet. Yes, the earth is amazing! But that is not due to merely "scientific phenomena and sheer chance." The earth is amazing because the amazing God of heaven created it, and His "touch" is all over the marvelous universe.

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Beginning Balance.....	\$20,621.48
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Debits	
Postage.....	\$2,094.18
Supplies	\$527.40
Ending Balance.....	\$20,490.60

THE ONE YOU MARRY COULD COST YOU YOUR SOUL

Eddy Gilpin

***If you are not single (having never been married),
or are not a widow/widower from a former Scriptural marriage, or are not
divorced from your previous mate because of his/her fornication, you
ARE NOT eligible to be married according to God's word.***

God established marriage for man's benefit. In the Garden of Eden God provided man with the things he needed. He gave man a place to live (Gen. 2:8), a profession to learn (Gen. 2:15), a precept to lead (Gen. 2:17), and a partner to love (Gen. 2:18). Although He was never married, Jesus demonstrated His approval of marriage with His presence at a wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2). The Bible states, "*Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*" (Heb. 13:4).

God, the One who ordained marriage, is very serious about marriage. And, since He is serious about it, man must take it seriously as well. If a person gets marriage wrong, he is in danger of missing heaven. That's how serious a matter it is. So, the one you marry has a bearing on your eternal destiny. Whether you are currently married or are thinking of getting married, please take the time to examine this very serious subject Biblically.

The Bible maintains that marriage is reserved for one man and one woman. "*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh*" (Gen. 2:24). About this passage Jesus stated, "*Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh*" (Matt. 19:4-5)? Notice that marriage is between a male and a female. Hence, "homosexual marriage" is not only immoral and ungodly, it is also unscriptural, and will keep those engaged in it out of heaven. One who is involved in any homosexual relationship is condemned because of

this sin (cf. Rom. 1:26-32; 1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Tim. 1:10). He/she must repent of it in order to be right with God (Luke 13:3). So, if your "marriage" is homosexual in nature, it will cost you your soul if you do not get out of it!

Concerning marriage in this context, Jesus also stated: "*Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder*" (Matt. 19:6). The Lord revealed the permanent nature of marriage. As seen above, it is between one man and one woman. Also, it is not to be dissolved by man since God has joined the two together in the marriage relationship. Paul stated, "*For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband*" (Rom. 7:2). So, the marriage of two eligible partners (more on this shortly) is to be maintained until the death of one of those partners. The surviving partner is then free to engage in another marriage (but only to one who is likewise Scripturally eligible for marriage).

Jesus elaborated on this matter by stating, "*Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery*" (Matt. 19:9). In this statement, Jesus revealed the only reason (short of death) that would allow one marriage to be dissolved and another to be contracted. That reason is "fornication" on the part of one of the marriage partners.

Romans 7 provides additional insight: "*So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but*

if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man" (Rom. 7:3). These passages clearly teach that one who is divorced without sexual infidelity of his/her partner being the reason, and marries another, is an adulterer. Not only that, but the present tense of the Greek word "committeth" conveys the idea of "keeps on committing." Hence, he/she is living in a state of adultery. And, since the Bible reveals that no adulterer will enter heaven (Gal. 5:19-21), if a marriage involves a partner who is an adulterer, that marriage is unacceptable to God and must be repented of in order for such persons to be acceptable to God. And, the only means for repentance to take place is for that unscriptural union to be dissolved. Those of Ezra's day had to "put away" the wives they had no right to have (cf. Ezra 10:10-12, 16-17, 44). Also, John plainly told Herod that he had no right to be married to "Philip's wife" (Matt. 14:3-4; Mark 6:17).

The only eligible partners for marriage are those who: 1) have never been married, 2) the survivor of a Scriptural marriage whose marriage partner has died, or 3) those whose marriage partner committed fornication. That's it! There are no others who are eligible to be married and still be right with God. Again, dear reader, please take note of just how seriously God takes marriage!

Further, the Bible warns, "*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners*" (1 Cor. 15:33). It is a certainty in American culture that one will marry someone from his realm of influence. And, it is possible to marry someone from that realm that will be a hindrance to living a Christian life, and not a help to one's living in a godly manner. So, it is incumbent upon

one to choose his mate wisely, as it is certainly possible to be married to one who will ultimately influence a marriage partner to lose his/her soul.

WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS OF THESE MATTERS?

“Homosexual marriage” is not acceptable to God. Those involved in it are lost.

The Bible reveals criteria for those who are acceptable candidates for marriage: 1) Those who have never been married, 2) The survivors of a Scriptural marriage whose mates have died, 3) The innocent parties (only) in marriages dissolved by fornication.

Marriages acceptable to God must be between two individuals who meet these criteria. Both must be eligible.

To emphasize – If you are contemplating marriage, you must be eligible to be married according to God’s stipulations. Also, your future mate must meet God’s qualifications as well. If you are not single (having never been married), or are not a widow/wid-

ower from a former Scriptural marriage, or are not divorced from your previous mate because of his/her fornication, you ARE NOT eligible to be married according to God’s word. Also, your future mate must fit into one of these categories as well. Be sure! Your soul depends on it.

If you are married, and either you or your current spouse do not meet these Biblical criteria, you have no right to be married. You are not acceptable to God in your current marriage. You cannot go to heaven if you continue in that marriage. You must repent and dissolve that relationship (divorce) if you have any hope of going to heaven.

Friend, God is serious about marriage. Men must take it just as seriously and abide by God’s teaching on it. If not, souls will be lost. Make sure you get it right. *“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth”* (Gal. 4:16)?

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GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

There is a lot of confusion about the biblical topic of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We cannot fully discuss all of the issues of this topic here, but I think that a simple, biblical study of this topic can be beneficial.

The nine individual gifts are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11. The purpose of the gifts were to qualify certain men to perform certain roles so the development of the church could continue. These gifts were not for the purpose of personal gain for the receiver of that gift or for his friends. The gifts were imparted directly to the apostles (Acts 1:8), and only the apostles were able to impart spiritual gifts to others. Philip, the evangelist, had received gifts which helped him to preach the Word of God (Acts 8:5-25). Because of his preaching many were baptized (v.12). However, Philip, not being an apostle, was not able to impart spiritual gifts to others. This was accomplished only when Peter and John (apostles) came to Samaria.

Not every instance where we read about “laying on of hands” is an instance where spiritual gifts are given. For example, when the church at Antioch “laid their hands” on Paul and Barnabas, it was not for the purpose of giving spiritual gifts. Paul, as an apostle, already had the gifts. It was for the purpose of bestowing blessings upon them and good wishes for a successful mission (cf. 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).

A study of Ephesians 4:8-13 will show that the impartation of spiritual gifts were not to go on unendingly. When the teaching or doctrine of Christ (the New Testament) had been completed, the gifts of the Spirit would cease. The revelation of the faith was confirmed by the gifts of healing, working of miracles, and discerning of spirits (Heb. 2:14; 1 Cor. 13:10). When the whole (the New Testament doctrine of Christ) came; the part (the gifts of the Spirit) would be done away. “The faith” has been once for all delivered (Jude 3). We need nothing else but the Bible. To rely on other books or to seek for signs or miracles today is to lack faith in God. Yes, God could do miracles and signs today as well as He did in Paul’s day, but His Word says He has chosen another way: *“For we walk by faith, not by sight”* (2 Cor. 5:7).

– Curtis L. E. Graves

Deity of Christ...

(Continued from page 73)

of Judgment (Rom. 14:10-11; Phil. 2:10-11). Apparently the wicked will never see the Lord God the Father in all His glory (Matt. 5:8; Heb. 12:14); but all will kneel before Jesus (YHWH), whom everyone will see on the last day when He appears (Matt. 25:31-33; 1 Thess. 4:13-5:3; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Titus 2:13).

17. Joel said that whosoever calls on the name of YHWH will be saved, or delivered (Joel 2:32), yet the New Testament clearly applies these words to Jesus (Acts 2:21,38; Rom. 10:9-13).

18. The Branch of David is obviously King Jesus, born of the seed of David, and that Branch is called YHWH: *“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD [YHWH] OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS”* (Jer. 23:5-6; cf. Zech. 6:12-13).

19. Revelation 1:8 says, *“I am the Alpha and the Omega saith the Lord God, who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”* Revelation 22:13-16 says, *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end...I Jesus.”* The Lord God Almighty is the Alpha and the Omega (Rev. 1:8). Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega (Rev. 1:11,18; 22:13,16); therefore, Jesus can rightfully be called the Lord God Almighty.

20. Because of this evidence and much more, Thomas was completely justified in saying to Jesus, *“My Lord and my God”* (John 20:28). Although Jesus rebuked Peter for his words in Matthew 16:22, saying that Peter did not savor the things that be of God, Jesus did not rebuke Thomas for his words in John 20:28. What Thomas said must have been “of God.” Jesus is our divine Lord and God, and “the God of Jesus” is God the Father, who is “above all” in authority (John 20:17; 1 Cor. 3:23; 8:4,6; 11:3; Eph. 1:3,17; 4:6; Heb. 1:8-9; 1 Peter 1:3).

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

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TWINS: There is a concept in education that is called "academic freedom." The bottom line is that a teacher can teach whatever he sees fit, unlimited, free to go whatever direction he chooses, without being obligated to contend for any particular view. In religious circles there is a concept called "unity in diversity." It is the twin of "academic freedom" in that it allows one to believe and practice whatever one wishes without restrictions. Right and wrong fade away under the glare of "agreeing to disagree" and still calling it unity. Academic freedom is part of the thinking of most college professors whatever their field. This is true of Bible professors also. Having received training in denominational seminaries, and holding to "academic freedom," it is not difficult to see how the church is being poisoned and the source of it. Digressive and liberal teachers in Bible departments have ruined any usefulness they once had toward Biblical soundness. The deadly twins have captured this arena" ...**James W. Boyd, McMinnville, TN**.

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