

"A Christian Is Neither Catholic, Jew, Nor Protestant"
 By Grover Stevens

Christ's Church is not a denomination, nor any part of denominationalism. It is not Catholic, Jewish, nor Protestant. All denominations (even the Catholics) admit that a person can be saved, can be a Christian, a child of God, in the family of God, and a member of the body of Christ WITHOUT being a member of ANY denomination (including the Catholic).

The Bible plainly teaches that Christ's Church is Christ's Body (Eph. 1:22-23), and that ALL saved people are added to this church by the Lord when they are saved (Acts 2:47). This is the church of which Christ is the HEAD (Eph. 1:22-23), for which Christ DIED (Eph. 5:25), which was purchased with His BLOOD (Acts 20:28), in which the HOLY SPIRIT dwells (I Cor. 3:16-17), of which Christ is the SAVIOUR (Eph. 5:23) and to which the Lord adds the SAVED (Acts 2:47).

This church met together and worshipped God (Acts 2:41-42), and rendered service to the needy saints (Acts 2:44-45) WITHOUT joining ANY denomination. They were simply Christians (Acts 11:26; I Pet. 4:16) – not Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, etc. (Acts 4:12; I Cor. 1:12-13). They were members simply and only of Christ's Church – the church to which God added them – the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16). Does it seem unreasonable to you that even though 19 centuries have passed by and in spite of the confusion and chaos of present day denominationalism, that Christ's church is in existence today in the same faith and form that it was during the days of the Apostles? This is exactly what the church of Christ is today! Yes, you can be JUST A CHRISTIAN, a member of the Body of Christ, His church, WITHOUT being a member of the Catholic Church, or the Baptist Church, or the Methodist Church, or ANY other denomination. Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
- Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
- Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
- Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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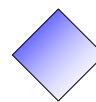


Schedule of Assembly

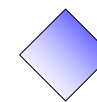
Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
 Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
 Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com



The Voice of Truth



September 12, 2010

Questions and Bible Answers
 By Jimmy Pettigrew

Is the doctrine, "once saved always saved", true or does the Bible teach that a child of God can fall and be lost?

The N.T. contains an abundance of evidence on the possibility of apostasy.

Jesus taught that some, in the time of temptation, would fall away (Lk. 8:13). **Some did fall.** Judas certainly did fall (Acts 1:25) and he was lost (Jn. 17:12). Judas was not a devil from the beginning. He received his apostleship along with the other Apostles, and he also could cast out devils (Matt. 10:8). *How can Satan cast out Satan?* (Mk. 3:23). Satan entered into Judas (Lk. 22:3; Jn. 13:27). Ananias and Sapphira sinned and died as liars and hypocrites (Acts 5:1-10). How about Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:12-24)? He had the same kind of faith, baptism, and salvation that the Samaritans had that are mentioned in vs. 12-13. He later sinned by trying to buy the gift of transferring miraculous power to others as the Apostles had (vs. 18-19). Peter clearly told him his heart was not right before God and he needed to repent of his wickedness. There is no doubt that Simon is lost. Peter told him he would perish (vs.20), and that he was under the bond of iniquity (vs.23). Hymenaeus and Philetus erred concerning the truth, and by their error, overthrew the faith of others (2 Tim. 2:17-18), and many other disciples abandoned the Lord as well (Jn. 6:66). A Christian can so sin as to be eternally lost, because he can sin as to be in a worse condition than he was before he became a Christian (2 Pet. 2:20-22). In First Timothy 4:1-2 the Holy Spirit expressly said that some *shall depart from the faith*. Yet, these were **IN THE FAITH!** Paul says the Spirit of God plainly foretold that they would depart from the faith! Dare any man say that one cannot fall, when God so plainly and in so many ways says that man can fall? To those who were *in the grace of Christ* (Gal. 1:6), Paul gives warning that they dare not follow the demands of the law of Moses, else *Christ is become of no effect upon you . . . ye are fallen from grace!* Friends, could it be any plainer?

The Corinthian Christians were admonished to take heed lest they fall (1 Cor. 10:12). There are things for the Christian to do to keep from falling (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

Man can fall from grace, and we've seen it clearly from a number of standpoints!

Would you please explain why the Church of Christ doesn't have instrumental music? It is mentioned a lot in the Psalms.

To walk by faith, we must respect and follow the instructions of God for faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). God did not accept the offering of Cain because it was not of faith (Gen. 4; Heb. 11:4); he offered *something* but it was not what God had authorized. It is not enough for man just to worship; we must worship in spirit and in truth for our worship to be acceptable (Jno. 4:23-24).

Churches of Christ do not use instruments in the worship of God because it is not authorized in the N.T. We must not presume that God will accept just any kind of music, but use in the worship the kind He has authorized to be used in worship today. Singing is the kind of music that is plainly commanded (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:15; Rom. 15:9).

God tells us that the O.T. was to be replaced with the N.T. (Jer. 31:31-34). And He tells us that it was. The O.T. was *nailed to the cross* (Col. 2:14), *abolished in his flesh* (Eph. 2:15), and *disannulled* (Heb. 7:18). Jesus Christ is *the mediator of the New Testament* (Heb. 9:15); and *He took away the first, that he might establish the second* (Heb. 10:9). Now, what could be plainer than that? God designed the law as a *schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ* (Gal. 3:24). It was not designed to last any longer, so it was removed at the cross. But some still keep going back

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to that law, and God spoke again through Paul, *Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4)*. If we seek to justify instrumental music by the O.T., we sever ourselves from Christ and fall from His grace! Friends, the word *law* also refers to the book of Psalms. Notice: *But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause (Jno. 15:25)*. Where is this found in the law? . . . *hate me without a cause (Psa. 35:19; also look at Jno. 10:34; Psa. 82:6; Jno. 12:34; Psa. 89:36)*.

We live under the N.T. Our lives, our worship, our hopes are defined in the N.T. Because the N.T. does not authorize instruments, nor incense, nor animal sacrifices, churches of Christ do not practice such in worship to God.

If somebody has accepted the Lord Jesus in repentance, and dies before baptism, wouldn't he go into the kingdom of God?

There are Scriptures that provide a clear answer. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mk. 16:16), Except one be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (Jno. 3:5), Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (Rom. 6:3), Now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins (Acts 22:16)*. These passages show the Lord's purpose for baptism. So,

The Poison of Bitterness

By Al Diestelkamp

Bitterness is an evil that can develop and grow within a person almost unbeknownst to him. I am convinced that it is a tool which Satan uses to entrap even the very ones who have worked hard at ridding their lives of many other sins.

The apostle Peter spoke of bitterness as a poison when rebuking the former sorcerer. He said, *"I see that you are poisoned by bitterness" (Acts 8:23)*.

Simon's condition was not exclusive to him. None of us are immune to its venom. Husbands are warned against being bitter towards their wives **(Col. 3:19)**. Though the inspired writer did not specifically mention the possibility, I have no doubt that wives can develop bitterness toward their husbands. Certainly, if a father fails to heed the

in light of the above Scriptures, answer these questions:

1. Is one saved before baptism? **(Mk. 16:16). NO!**
2. Is one in the kingdom before baptism? **(Jno. 3:5). NO!**
3. Is one *in Christ* before baptism? **(Rom. 6:3). NO!**
4. Are sins washed away before baptism? **(Acts 22:16). NO!**

If one is not looking for a loophole to keep from doing what God plainly teaches, it is not difficult to understand the answer to the question. If a man dies on his way to his own wedding, is his intended bride a widow? If one dies before being sworn in as a new citizen, is he a citizen anyway? The truth is that no one can *accept the Lord Jesus* without baptism, for it was the Lord who put baptism into the gospel and required it of all who would come to him. One cannot accept the Lord by faith only, by confession only, by repentance only, nor by baptism only. All, not just one, of those are required by Christ. One accepts the Lord only when he is willing to accept the kind of life which the Lord requires. That life begins with faith that repents and submits in baptism, from which one is *raised to walk in newness of life* in submission to Jesus Christ.

Christ doesn't give us options about how to accept Him. The truth is that until one is *baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3)*, he is not *in Christ*. Until one believes and is baptized, he is not saved **(Mk. 16:16)**. Until one is *born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (Jno. 3:5)*. And until one is *baptized into Christ, into his death (Rom. 6:3)*, his sins have not been washed away **(Acts 22:16)**. ♦

apostle's instructions to avoid discouraging his children by provoking them to wrath **(Col. 3:21)**, they will likely develop bitterness toward him.

Preachers are prime candidates for this poisonous condition. Though most preachers are treated well by the brethren, occasionally they are not. Unreasonable expectations of the preacher and/or his family can cause resentment which, if he is not careful, will lead to bitterness. Or a preacher may expect brethren to live up to his expectations, and get discouraged when they don't. Many able men have lost their influence, some even losing their faith, after being overcome with bitterness toward the brethren.

The elderly (and those approaching old age) seem to be

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especially susceptible to bitterness. Perhaps the loss of energy, diminished capacities, health problems and the perception (real or imagined) that the younger generation doesn't appreciate us, opens the door to bitterness.

Bitterness is the state of being "sharp and disagreeable; harsh; severe; piercing" (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary). It can be brought on by a number of circumstances, including: discouragement, hopelessness, envy and jealousy.

The New Testament has several things to say about this attitude:

1. It needs to be *"put away" (Eph. 4:25-32)*. The apostle Paul lists it among many other sins, and among those which "grieve the Holy Spirit."

2. It is connected with *"cursing" (Rom. 3:9-18)*. Christians who would never curse verbally may be guilty of "virtual cursing" by their display of bitterness. This may be only in thought, but if unchecked will eventually manifest itself in harshness.

3. It is a spiritual *"poison" (Acts 8:18-23)*. As already noted, Simon, who in becoming a Christian had to repent of his sorcery, was told that his bitterness was his poison that had him *"bound by iniquity."* Suddenly without the attention of the masses, perhaps he became jealous of the apostles' power to convey the Holy Spirit by the laying on of their hands.

4. It can *"spring up" unannounced (Heb. 12:12-17)*. Read these verses and note how the Hebrew writer tells us that we ought to be *"looking carefully... lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble..." (v. 15)*. If unchecked it can take hold of us so powerfully that, like Esau, we might not find place for repentance, even if we want to.

It's one thing to identify a problem, and another to provide a remedy. By applying the scriptures I believe we can beat this villain on two fronts.

First, we should help prevent it in others by avoiding

what promotes it. For instance, a husband's bitterness can be lessened by the wife's attitude and behavior **(Eph. 5:25, 28, 33a)**. A wife's bitterness may be avoided if the husband treats her as God instructs **(Eph. 5:22, 33b)**. Parents' bitterness can be minimized if children will obey **(Eph. 6:1-3)**, and children will be less likely to become bitter if fathers will listen to God **(Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21)**.

All Christians should make a concerted effort not to be a discouragement to others. Younger Christians, in their enthusiasm and zeal, must not leave the older generation behind. They need to understand that "change" (even though it is within authority) is unsettling to the elderly. Bring them along gently.

Older Christians need to accept what they know in their hearts - that change is inevitable, and as long as it is scriptural, it may even be desirable. Don't "quench the spirit" of the youth lest they become bitter.

You can help a preacher avoid the pitfall of bitterness by being an encouragement to him in his efforts to teach the lost and edify the saints. Treat him as the brother he is, rather than an employee of the church who can be hired and fired at will.

Knowing that envy and jealousy promote bitterness, we should avoid flaunting power, possessions, or any other advantage we have over others.

Furthermore, we must fight bitterness in ourselves by actively resisting it. To borrow a phrase from Barney Fife, "Nip it in the bud!"

Treat it like any other temptation. Start by recognizing Satan as the source of bitter attitudes.

When the symptoms appear, study and meditate on the scriptures instead of having a "pity-party."

Be willing to rejoice with those who are blessed more than you—replace envy with joy. And most of all, pray for help.

Bitterness has the potential to consume a person and drain him of his spirituality, and oh, how Satan enjoys that!

Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦