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I Can't Find It In The Bible! - by Jimmy Thomas

I hear many things taught now-a-days that I can't find in the Bible. For example, I am told that it doesn't matter what one believes just so he is honest and sincere. Now I have been looking for the passage of scripture which says this but I just can't find it. I do read where some will be damned for believing a lie rather than the truth. (2 Thess. 2:11,12) This leads me to think that it does matter what one believes. Then, there was Saul of Tarsus who persecuted the church. He was honest and sincere, but he was wrong. (Acts 23:1; 26:9,10; 22:3-16) If it doesn't matter what one believes then error is as good as the truth. But Jesus said, "ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) If this theory is correct, then the person who honestly believes that Jesus is NOT God's Son will be saved even though the Lord said, "except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24) I conclude, therefore, that it does matter what one believes regardless of how honest and sincere he may be.

I have heard men say that there is nothing in a name. They also claim that one name is as good as another.

But I haven't been able to find this in the Bible either. If there is nothing in a name why did God change Abram's name to Abraham (Gen. 17:5) and Jacob's name to Israel? (Gen 35:10) Why did Jesus change Simon's name to Cephas? (John 1:42) If there is nothing in a name then the name Beelzebub is just as important as the name of Christ. Yet Peter declared, "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) Isaiah prophesied that God's people would "be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name." (Isa 62:2) Luke tells us "that the disciples were called Christians 'first in Antioch.'" (Acts 11:26) Paul desired that all men be Christians (Acts 26:28, 29), and Peter admonishes us to "glorify God in this name." (1 Peter 4:16) There is something in a name and one name is not as good as another.

I continue to hear that one church is as good as another. Men are urged to join the church of their choice. This is something else that I can't find in the Bible. I have read where Jesus promised to build His church (Matt.

16:18), and where He purchased it with His own blood. (Acts 20:28) I have also read how God "gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body...." (Eph. 1:22,23) Since the "body" and the "church" are the same and Paul declares that there is "but one body" (1 Cor. 12:20; Eph. 4:4) we see that there is but one church. If "there is but one church" then one church is not as good as another, and man has no permission from God to join the church of his choice. Churches founded by men tan not be as good as the church built by the Son of God. . Many argue that one can be saved and never be a member of the church. "The church doesn't save," they say. I know that the church does not save but Paul teaches that Christ is "the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23) which is the church. Since Jesus saves the church one cannot be saved outside of the church. Furthermore, God adds the saved to the church. (Acts 2:47) The saved are those who have forgiveness or are redeemed through the blood of Christ. (Eph. 1:7) These are the church "which He purchased with His own blood." (Acts 20:28) No benefits from the blood of Christ can be derived outside of the church. There is no reconciliation except in the one church. (Eph. 2:16) No one can be saved without being a member of the church.

I hear men preaching that salvation is by faith only. "Just believe on the Lord and you will be saved," sinners are told. This is something else that I

can not find in the Bible. "But what about the jailor?" (Acts 16:31), someone asks. Well, if you will read a little further you will see that "the word of the Lord" was spoken unto him and his house, that they were baptized immediately, and were not referred to as "having believed in God" until after baptism. To be saved by faith only is to be saved by faith exclusive of everything else; yet all admit that we are likewise saved by God, by Christ, His blood, and by love, repentance, and confession. If one is saved by faith only then God's word is untrue for it says that justification is "not by faith only." (James 2:24) "Faith apart from works is dead." (James 2:17,26) "Can that (dead) faith save him?" (James 2:14) Turning unto the Lord follows belief. (Acts 11:21) No one can have his sins "blotted out" before turning or being converted (Acts 3:19), hence, no one can be saved by faith only.

Another very popular teaching is that baptism is not necessary to salvation. "One doesn't have to be baptized in order to be saved," many contend. But where does the Bible teach this? I have not been able to find it. I can read where Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mk. 16:16) Belief and baptism are here placed before salvation and both are necessary to it. In fact everywhere baptism and salvation are mentioned together salvation always follows baptism. "Repent... be baptized... unto the remission of your sins." (Acts 2:38)

"Be baptized, and wash away thy sins." (Acts 22:16) "We were buriedthrough baptism into death.... might walk in newness of life.... for he that hath died is justified (freed, KJV) from sin." Rom. 8:4,7) "...doth now save you, even baptism...." (1 Peter 3:21) Baptism, therefore, comes before and is necessary to the remission of sins, the washing away of sins, being freed from sin, and being saved. Furthermore, baptism puts one "into Christ" (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27) where salvation is found. (2 Tim. 2:10) Baptism, then IS necessary to salvation and no one is forgiven of alien sins without being baptized for the remission of sins.

Paul teaches that faith comes by hearing the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17) and that without faith one can not please God. (Heb. 11:6) Also he warns against going "beyond the things which are written" (1 Cor. 4:6; cf. 2 John 9), and places an anathema upon anyone who would preach another gospel. (Gal. 1:6-9) Since many of the things taught now-a-days did not come from Christ, we should reject them, because being not of faith they do not please God. Should we practice them we would be without God, and if we were to preach them we would be accursed. Let us say as did the apostle Paul, "according to that which is written, I believed, and therefore did I speak." (2 Cor. 4:13) "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1) - 4018 Knud

Dr., Columbia, Tenn.— Via **The Gospel Guardian, VOLUME 15, August 8, 1983 NUMBER 14, PAGE 2,10b**

Effects Of Gospel Preaching -

by Gordon Wilson, Sacramento, CA
"And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysis the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them." (Acts 17:32-34.)

The above verses conclude the remarks of inspiration concerning Paul's labors in Athens. He had preached the gospel faithfully and these verses sum up the effects of his preaching on the hearers. There are three attitudes toward the truth manifested by different portions of his audience. Some mocked, or frankly disbelieved it. Others showed a passing interest, or indifference toward it. Some believed and embraced the gospel. I believe it would be worthwhile to inquire as to why the gospel did not have the same effect on everyone. Why the differing attitudes toward the preaching of the gospel? Could it be that some of their personalities "matched" Paul's, while others clashed, and thus their feeling for the preacher influenced them? Do you suppose that the Lord was responsible for their obedience or disobedience by electing some to salvation and others to damnation? I suggest that these are not the causes

for the effects of gospel preaching.

There is one gospel for everybody. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mk. 16:15.) The effect of preaching the gospel depends entirely on the hearts of the hearers. Some prepare their hearts to receive the truth, whatever it may be, and others condition their hearts to oppose anything which they do not think to be approved by human wisdom. "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it." (Ezra 7:10.) Before a person can be favorably impressed by the truth his heart must be prepared to receive it. If he listens with a prejudiced heart the effect of the gospel preaching will be negative. That would seem to be the meaning of **2 Thess. 2:10-12**: ". . . They received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." I do not take this to mean that God told anyone a lie, or that he is responsible for anyone believing a lie. Rather, the strong delusion was sent by the preaching of the gospel. Those who prepared not their hearts to receive the truth, (they had not the "love of the truth"), believed a lie instead. The Lord was not responsible for their ungodly attitude, but they had pleasure in unrighteousness. The truth that could save them if they believed, could condemn them if they disbelieved.

In this connection we may refer to an Old Testament incident. **Exodus 4:21** says: "And the Lord said unto Moses, When thou goest to return to Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: But I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go." Here God said that he would harden Pharaoh's heart that he should not obey Moses. How did he do it? All of the force in the world could not have hardened anyone's heart who wanted to receive the truth. How can it be said then that God hardened Pharaoh's heart? Was it by withholding the truth? To the contrary; it was by sending Moses with his miraculous signs that the Lord hardened the heart of

the Egyptian monarch. If Pharaoh had taken the right attitude toward the message of Moses, the effect of the preaching would have been good. But he rejected the truth, thus his heart was hardened.

Surely all of this is sufficient to show that effects of gospel preaching depend entirely upon the disposition of heart among the hearers. It is only our responsibility to be sure that we are preaching the truth. We cannot be responsible for how it is received. ---- Via **The Gospel Guardian, VOLUME 10. November 20, 1958 NUMBER 29, PAGE 6a**

