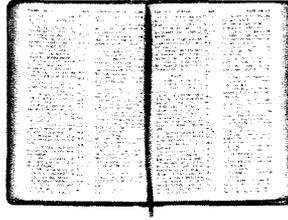


THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16)

Volume 42

APRIL, 2005

Number 4

HOW DOES ONE BECOME A FRIEND OF CHRIST?

[The following article first appeared in THE INSTRUCTOR, Jan., 1984 – 21 years ago.]

One can *not* become a friend of Christ by going "to the altar and praying through to salvation." Advocates of the "praying through" theology never give a Scripture that teaches that alien sinners can be saved by going to the altar and praying. Nowhere in the Scriptures do we find where any alien sinner was ever told to "come to the altar and pray." Neither does one become a friend of Christ by "picking out some good church he likes and joining it. Every denominational church is destined to "be rooted up." (Please read carefully and honestly Psalms 127:1 which says, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it," and Matthew 15:13 which says, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.")

A religious "experience" does not make one a friend of Christ. There is no Scriptural evidence that one is a friend of the Lord just because he may have had a religious "experience". Giving so-called "testimonials" about how good the Lord is and how much one loves Him does not make one a friend of Christ. The fact that one lives an upright moral life does *not* necessarily mean that he is a friend of the Lord.

In John 15:14 Jesus told His disciples: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." It is quite obvious from this statement of Jesus Christ that one can not be, and thus can

not become a friend of His unless he **does** what Jesus commands.

To do what Jesus commands **one must learn and believe** what Jesus says. Only then can he truly **do** what Jesus commands. The source of information must be the Scriptures. As we study the Scriptures we **learn** that FAITH, REPENTANCE, CONFESSION and BAPTISM are conditions set forth by the Lord that we must meet in order to **become** His friends. Please read and study carefully Hebrews 11:6; John 20:30-31; Romans 10:17; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 10:9-10; Mark 16:15-16 and Galatians 3:26-27. Do you **believe** what these verses say? If so, you will **become** a friend of the Lord **when** you obey them!

To continue to be His friend, you must continue to **learn, believe** and obey whatever Jesus commands. This is **how** one **becomes** and **remains** a friend of Jesus Christ. (CRS)

SOMEONE HAS SAID: "Nothing is easier than fault-finding; no talent, no self-denial, no brains, no character, are required to set up in the grumbling business."

JESUS CHRIST said: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoso loveth and maketh a lie." (Rev. 22:14-15).

THE INSTRUCTOR

(USPS # 581680)

Published monthly in the interest of truth and righteousness by the congregation of Christ, meeting at 4777 US Highway 431, Albertville, Alabama.

ELDERS

DEACONS

Lionel Gary

Mike Pack

Rex Henson

Jerry Tucker

Carrol R. Sutton

Gerald White

CARROL RAY SUTTON

Editor

Send all questions, comments and criticisms to the Editor, 4777 US Highway 431, Albertville, AL 35950.

(256) 878-0920 or (sutton1103@charter.net)

Second-class postage paid in
Albertville, AL 35950.

Editorial...

HELL! IS THERE A PLACE OF ETERNAL TORMENT FOR THE WICKED? (No. 37)

In previous studies of Hell, we have been exposing the *false teaching* that there is no hell of eternal torment for the wicked and those who teach it. There is! The Scriptures prove hell awaits the wicked, including the devil and his angels.

Most, if not all, who teach that there will be no eternal punishment of the wicked, but annihilation (or a ceasing to exist), also *deny* that man has or possesses a soul. They contend that man is wholly mortal and does not have an eternal soul (or spirit) within the physical body.

Let us resume our consideration of some additional arguments that are made *against* the doctrine of eternal torment of the wicked as taught in the Scriptures. The arguments being examined will not stand in the light of Scriptural scrutiny.

ARGUMENT XX - THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN ETERNAL TORMENT FOR THE WICKED BELIEVE THE LIE THAT THE SERPENT (THE DEVIL) TOLD EVE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN WHEN HE SAID: "...Ye shall not surely die." (Gen. 3:4)

Roy B. Thurmon, Seventh Day Adventist, said: "God said to Adam: 'Thou shalt surely die' (Gen. 2:17) if you eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.. The devil countered: 'You shall

NOT surely die' (Gen. 3:4). This was the first lie and it is still being propagated today. So if the wicked are immortal and 'shall not surely die,' then of course they will suffer endless misery in hell. But if the wicked do not receive immortality then they cannot possibly be tormented eternally in hell." (Truth For Today BIBLE LECTURES, p. 3).

Curtis Dickinson said: "If man consists primarily of something that cannot die, then man cannot die; he cannot die now or at judgment. But Scripture repeatedly affirms that the 'wages of sin is death' and 'the soul that sinneth it shall die.' (Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4) It was Satan, the great deceiver, who first stated, 'Thou shalt not surely die.' (Genesis 3:4) Christ said that Satan is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44)." (What the Bible Teaches About Immortality and Future Punishment, page 7).

REPLY:

1. Those who claim that *death* is a state of non-existence, ceasing to be or annihilation are the ones who claim that we who teach the truth about eternal torment for the wicked believe the lie that the serpent told in the garden of Eden.

2. To reach the conclusions that have just been stated above, there must be a lot of assuming and asserting done without proof from the Scriptures. Such was the case.

3. Genesis 2:16-17 says: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." We read in Genesis 3:4 that "the serpent (the devil - Ed) said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die."

4. Who believes the lie the devil told Eve in the garden of Eden? Those who teach what the Scriptures say about the punishment of the wicked or those who teach that the wicked will not be tormented in hell, but will be annihilated or cease to exist? Who is really guilty of believing and teaching the devil's lie?

5. Eve was deceived by the lie that was told by the devil and she violated the command of God by eating of the fruit "of the tree of knowledge of good and evil." "She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and

he did eat." (Genesis 3:6; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:13-14).

6. Consider carefully the following questions.

A. Did they *die the day* they ate like God said they would? Yes, indeed they did!

B. Did they *not die* as Satan said they would "not surely die"? No! Satan had lied to Eve!

C. Did they die physically "*the day*" they ate? No! They lived hundreds of years. Adam did not die physically until he was 930 years old. (See Genesis 5:5).

D. Did they die *spiritually the day* they ate the forbidden fruit? Of course they did! The word *death* basically suggests *a separation*. Genesis 3:23-24- tells us that "the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden,...So he drove out the man; and placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword...to keep the way of the tree of life." NOTE: Man was separated from God. He no longer enjoyed the fellowship that he once had. He died spiritually that day!

NOTE: W. E. Vine's EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS defines *DEATH* (from *Thanatos*) as follows. It "is used in Scriptures of:

(a) the separation of the soul (the spiritual part of man) from the body (the material part), the latter ceasing to function and turning to dust, e.g., John 11:13; Heb. 2:15; 5:7; 7:23....

(b) the separation of man from God; Adam died on the day he disobeyed God, Gen. 2:17... Death is the opposite of life; it never denotes non-existence. As spiritual life is 'conscious existence in communion with God,' so spiritual death is 'conscious existence in separation from God'..." (Volume I, page 276).

NOTE: Alexander Cruden defines *DEATH* as follows. "I. The separation of the soul from the body, Gen. XXV. 11. This is temporal death. -II. A separation of soul and body from God's favour in this life...This is spiritual death. III. The perpetual

separation of the whole man from God's heavenly presence and glory, to be tormented for ever with the devil and his angels, Rev. ii:11. This is the second death, or eternal death.

..." (Cruden's Dictionary of Bible Terms, page 45). Editor's Note: "This is an exact and unaltered reproduction by the photolithoprint process of the original edition of *Cruden's Explanations of Scripture Terms* published in London in the year 1840 by The Religious Tract Society".

FURTHER NOTE: Let us consider some examples from the Scriptures that prove by contextual usage that *DEATH* does have the above meanings.

(1) Genesis 35:18-19- "**And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.**" NOTE: At death Rachel's soul departed from her body. Physical death occurs when the soul is separated from the body.

(2) James 2:26- "**For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.**" NOTE: When the spirit (or soul - Ed) is separated from the body, physical death occurs. The body is then spoken of as a dead body.

(3) Ephesians 2:1- "**And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.**" NOTE: Before becoming saints those to whom Paul wrote in this letter were *separated* from God and Christ. They had no fellowship with them. They were dead spiritually! They were dead in trespasses and sins! This is an example of some, who were physically alive, but they were spiritually dead!

(4) 1 Timothy 5:6 - "**But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.**" NOTE: The younger widow that lives in pleasure is dead *spiritually* although she is very much alive *physically*. While she is physically alive she is separated from God. She has no fellowship or communion with God.

(5) Luke 9:60 says: '**Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but**

go thou and preach the kingdom of God." NOTE: Those who were to be buried were *physically* dead. The ones who were to bury them were *spiritually* dead.

(6) Revelation 21:8 – "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." NOTE: Without question the wicked will be eternally separated from God (and the righteous) which is "the second death." Again we see that *death* involves a separation. Those who deny that *death* involves a separation must close their eyes and stop their ears and harden their hearts to the revealed truth as shown above.

7. Since the devil said they would "not surely die" like God said they would, the devil was guilty of lying because they *did die* the day they ate as God said they would. God told

the truth. They died spiritually (separated from God) *the day* they ate! NOTE: Since they did not die physically (did not cease to exist, did not become a non-being, were not annihilated as opponents of truth claim *death* means) the day they ate, the devil must have told the truth. They are the ones who believe the devil's lie and they must believe (to be consistent) that God lied. NOTE: Yet they have the temerity or gall to accuse those of us who truly believe what God said of believing the devil's lie. FURTHER NOTE: Even in this matter, they, like Satan the deceiver, have reversed the truth and turned it into a lie in an effort to deceive the unwary and undiscerning.

"Take heed that no man deceive you." (Mt. 24:4) (To be continued) (CRS)

GOSPEL MEETINGS at East Albertville
 April 29 – May 1 at 7: pm (except regular times on the Lord's Day. RANDY BARNES will preach.
 Hear Services Alive Over INTERNET
 Sunday: 9:30 am & 10:30 am & 6:00pm
eastalbertvillechurchofchrist.com

SENTENCE SERMONS

We always have enough time to do right. It is never necessary that we do wrong.

* * * * *

How we live is much more important than *how long* we live. *How* are you living?

* * * * *

The person who truly walks with God always knows in what direction he is going.

* * * * *

Although Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us, we must prepare ourselves for that place.

* * * * *

A poor inattentive listener seldom hears a good sermon.

CHURCH OF CHRIST
4777 US Highway 431
Albertville, AL 35950

Second-class postage