

**A Quarterly Religious Journal**  
*(Presented by email)*

# “LIGHT FOR OUR AGE”

**Bob Oliver, Editor**

[boboliver32446@gmail.com](mailto:boboliver32446@gmail.com)

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*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.  
Psalm 119:105*

## ***Feature One: Editorial***

### ***God Loves Us, But Does He Mean What He Says?***

The fact that God sent his only begotten son into the world to suffer and die for us indicates that God loves us. In fact the entire Bible teaches

this. After man sinned, the Father set in motion the plan that would redeem the world. The Old Testament is the story of how God's plan was put into action. The gospels tell of the Savior, his work, his sacrifice, and his love for us. The epistles give us the instructions as to how to live in accordance with the Father's will, and the final book, Revelation explains that his victory over evil is certain.

There is a passage that is important for us to remember. It is Romans 15:4 "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." This text explains why the Old Testament is necessary for us to know and understand. Specifically, this text is speaking of the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning our Lord. Generally, it is also showing us the nature of God.

Over the years I have taught many young men that do not believe in God, or Christ. They were and are good young men. Does God mean what he says when he writes in 2 Thessalonians 1:7 "...and to you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, <sup>8</sup> in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, <sup>10</sup> when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe...." Jesus agrees with the Thessalonian text as we read his words in Matthew 25:41 Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

We sometimes forget the wisdom in the Old Testament that tells us

“There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.”  
Proverbs 14:12. With these things in mind, consider just one story from the Old Testament that gives us a picture of God’s judgment. The story is found in 1 Kings 13.

Jeroboam was the king over the Northern nation of Israel. He was afraid that if the people went back to Jerusalem which was in the kingdom of Judah, they would forsake him and return to Rehoboam, Solomon’s son. Therefore he built two calves of gold for the people to worship. One of these he placed in the city of Bethel. As chapter thirteen opens a man of God (a prophet) was sent by God to travel to Bethel and to “cry out against the altar”. King Jeroboam instructed his people to arrest him. Suddenly, his hand which was pointed toward the man of God withered and was paralyzed. Jeroboam suddenly had a change of heart and asked the man of God to pray that God would restore his hand. When his hand was restored he invited this prophet of God into his palace to be refreshed from his journey. The man of God refused stating that God had told him not to eat bread nor drink water while in the Northern Kingdom, and he was to return home a different way than he took going up into Jeroboam’s kingdom.

Imagine how brave a person had to be to walk into the middle of a religious service in the presence of a king and condemn it openly. He was in enemy territory. The king could have taken his life for this act, and that may be exactly what he intended to do.

The man of God then began his journey home. He had obeyed God and had completed a very dangerous mission. But on the way he was met by the sons of a man claiming to also be a prophet of God. This man claimed that God had instructed him to bring the prophet to his house to be refreshed before going on.

As you read in 1 Kings 13, the Bible tells us, “but he lied unto him.” (verse 18). How would you judge this situation? Most that have not read this story would punish the lying false prophet. God, however, took the life of the man of God. God had told him what to do, and he did not do it. He should have obeyed God’s instructions. Did God mean what he said? Certainly he did. Would you have taken the life of this prophet even after he had stood before the king and completed that portion of his work? I really doubt it. My point is that God does not react the way we often do. As Paul wrote to the Roman brethren, this is a lesson that teaches us something about the nature of God.

I am not saying that God is mean or unfair. Far from it. God is just in all that he does. If we want to go to heaven we should never do anything contrary to His will. Remember Proverbs 14:12. It may seem trivial to us, but God may not see the violation of his word as do we.

***Feature 2: an article by R. C. Oliver***

**July, 1955 edition of *Light*  
Why I Believe Baptism To Be Essential**

I believe baptism to be essential to one’s salvation because Christ, the apostles, and all other inspired teachers, when they speak of baptism, speak of it as being essential.

It is written in Mark 16:16 that Jesus said: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Jesus has therefore predicated salvation upon these two conditions, faith and baptism, which can never be omitted; for where salvation is predicated upon any one or more conditions, though other conditions may be implied, yet those

specified can never be removed—they are essential.

On that historic Pentecost the apostle Peter affirmed that all firm believers must be baptized before they can be saved. In concluding his sermon he said: “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly,” but to “know assuredly” is equivalent to “believe firmly.” That they did believe firmly is evidenced by their question: “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”—Acts 2:37. It was therefore to this body of firm believers that Peter said: “Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”—Acts 2:38. From Peter’s testimony we therefore conclude that before even a firm believer can enjoy the “remission of sins,” he must first be baptized. Where there is no baptism, there can be no “remission of sins.”

Paul, the apostle, corroborates the testimony of both Jesus and Peter, for he affirms that baptism puts one *into* Christ (Romans 6:3-4), and that “as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”—Galatians 3:27. It is obvious that if a man is out of Christ he is lost, and the only way one can enter Christ is through the act of New Testament baptism; therefore, apart from New Testament baptism no man can be saved. This inevitable conclusion is further verified when we consider the manner in which the early disciples reacted to the command of baptism: they did not wait to be baptized as many do now, until Easter, or Christmas, or some other annual event; rather, they were always baptized on “the same day” (Acts 2:41), and even in “the same hour of the night” that they first heard the gospel preached, even though it was the hour of midnight!—Acts 16:25,33. Certainly there is no reasonable explanation as to why these disciples acted so meticulously, or why they were baptized with such speed, except that they were told by their inspired teachers that baptism is essential to their salvation. Their action

alone should convince every honest heart that except a man is baptized in water he cannot be saved.

And now, in order to establish your faith more firmly on the importance of water baptism, I suggest that you carefully read and study the following scriptures: Acts 2:36-41; 3:19-21; 8:12-13; 9:18 cf. 22:16 and Romans 6:3-4; Acts 10:48; 16:14-15; 16:30-34; 19:1-7; Galatians 3:26-27; Colossians 2:10-12; and 1 Peter 3:21.

To all those who have carefully studied the above scriptures, it is now obvious that when men teach that baptism is not essential to salvation, then the scripture is fulfilled which said: “The leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed” (Isaiah 9:16 cf Matthew 15:14); for it is a remarkable fact that there is not one case of New Testament conversion on record but that baptism (a burial) in water is either specified or implied as a part of that conversion; therefore, I beseech you: do not let the “good words and fair speeches” (Romans 16:18) of a false teacher deceive you; rather, arise this very hour, and be baptized, and “wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord.”—Acts 22:16.

*Next quarter the issue of Light will conclude the study of baptism with “Objections to Baptism Considered”.*

### ***Feature 3: Our Communication: Teachers, Watch your Words***

In this lesson I am not referring to bad language, I am referring to language or words that are hard to understand. In 1 Corinthians 14:9 Paul writes, “So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?” In this text Paul is discussing the correct usage of speaking in another language, or in tongues.

There is a principle, however, that applies to us today. If we choose what we might call “big” words in our teaching, some in our audience may not understand what we are saying. A good teacher can take the difficult subject and make it simple to understand. When we communicate with others it is always important to get the idea across. Using words that the audience may not understand is counter to good teaching.

#### ***Feature 4: Bible Questions***

I recently ran across a criticism of the church of Christ. The author of this point ridiculed the church for teaching a “formula” for becoming a Christian. The formula was “hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized”. Interestingly enough, later in the article the author wrote that to be saved we must believe, and repent of our sins. If one is a formula, then both would be considered a formula. The author of the article might argue that what is taught be the church of Christ includes “works”. I would agree to that statement. What he is not considering, however, is that what he believes also contains works according to our Lord. Jesus said in John 6:28-29, “Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? [29] Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” Certainly anything God asks us to do is a “work of God” and must be obeyed.

#### ***Humor:***

A young man had just graduated from college with a degree in Bible and was excited that his home congregation invited him to speak that next Sunday morning. He called his mother and told her to call the whole family

and make sure they would be there. She told him that his favorite uncle had been very sick, and it might be best for him to call his uncle and check on him. He agreed. When he called his uncle, his uncle told him that while he did not feel very well, he would make it a point to be there.

The Sunday came and the young man preached to his home congregation. His entire family was there to hear it, including his uncle. After the service as they were leaving the building the young preacher told his uncle that he really hoped he would get better soon. His uncle replied, “I hope you do too.”

***In Closing:***

Thank you for letting me come once again into your home. I have enjoyed our visit.

In the Master’s service,

*Bob Oliver*