

FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY

The Christian's assurance of eternal life hinges upon these three things: Faith, Hope, and Charity (1 Corinthians 13:1-13). The three are so closely related and play an important part in our salvation that should we remove one of them heaven could not be ours.

FAITH. What is faith? *"Now faith is the substance (ground or confidence) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* (Hebrews 11:1)

Why is faith important? *"But without faith it is impossible to please him for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* (Hebrews 11:6)

Is there more than one faith? *"There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all."* (Ephesians 4:4-6)

How is faith shown? *"Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."* (James 2:18)

HOPE. What is hope? Hope is a desire for something with the expectation of receiving it in time to come. *"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?"* (Romans 8:24)

The expectation (or fulfillment) of our hope is eternal life in Christ when this life ends. *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Romans 6:23)

The Christian hope is anchored in heaven, not in the material things of life. *"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."* (1 Corinthians 15:19)

Hope is the anchor of the soul. *"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast."* (Hebrews 6:19)

CHARITY. What is charity? Charity is love and is the greatest of the three. *"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."* (1 Corinthians 13:13)

What is the importance of charity? *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."* (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

What is the source of love? *"Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."* (1 John 4:7)

What profit is there in loving God? *"The Lord preserveth all them that love him; but all the wicked will he destroy."* (Psalms 145:20) *"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."* (1 Corinthians 2:9)

How can we prove our love? *"If ye love me, keep my commandments."* (John 14:15) *"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."* (John 14:21)

Do you have FAITH in God? Do you have HOPE of eternal life? Do you LOVE God? *"When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."* (2 Thessalonians 7:9)

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IMPROPER MOTIVES

When we do something, we have a motive in doing it. When we attend church, we have motives. Some of these motives might be improper. Some improper motives might be:

1. Habit: I'm afraid this applies to lots of us. We attend just because we have developed the habit. We are not so concerned

with the actual desire to worship God. In some cases we are just "going with the crowd". David was **glad** to attend the house of the Lord.

2. For entertainment: Denominational churches use many lures to get people to attend. Recently I saw a big sign in front of one of these churches stating the next service was especially for parents with children and the babies would have a "free picture" taken of them. Others have special forms of music - quartets, instrumental groups, etc. Can we possibly believe they encourage people to attend to worship God? I think not!

3. Social reasons: To see and to be seen. No consideration here for worship that is right. Certainly we are encouraged to Christian fellowship - but not for these motives.

4. For business reasons: The world considers this the "thing to do" in becoming acquainted in a community. They say, "Join the church of your choice, join the Chamber of Commerce, etc..." Brethren, we must not let this be a reason for our attendance. We should "seek first the kingdom of God", realizing that the necessities will be provided in His own way.

5. Because of the fine buildings: This should not be a factor. We all enjoy comfortable places to meet, but to make this a prime consideration is wrong.

6. Because we like the preacher: Sometime ago I heard a couple say they had attended a number of different churches in town and finally "placed their membership" with a certain denominational church because "we like the preacher". I am reminded of the scripture that states there are those who "*by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*" (Romans 16:18). We should be concerned with doctrine, with worshipping the Lord as He commands.

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INVITATION

Each time the church meets, an invitation is offered: for those who have never obeyed the gospel and for those who have obeyed the gospel to examine their life for needed changes. However, week after week, month after month, and even year after year passes with not a single response. Are all of us that sure of our spiritual condition and that no change is needed? Let's hope

and pray that is the case. However, I fear that pride, procrastination, or false security may get in the way. My friends, we are not questioning if the warranty on our refrigerator is valid; we are talking about the destination of our soul for all of eternity should we die at this very minute. There will be only two possibilities: heaven or hell.

If you have any question or doubt in your mind, please do something about it. Certainly the invitation at church services is an excellent time to respond to the gospel; although, it is not the only time. Acts 2:47 states that "*...the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*". If you decide to obey the gospel, you can, night or day, any day of the week ... Satan will always try to convince you that now is not a convenient time; however, Paul baptized individuals at midnight (Acts 16:25-33). Why did Paul baptize them at midnight? Because it was that urgent and important. Felix, after trembling at the thought of the judgment to come desired to wait for a more convenient time; we find no record in the Bible that it ever came (Acts 24:25).

If you have Bible questions about your salvation, please do not continue to live in doubt and fear. A private study can be set up at your home, at the church, or wherever you would like. I may not have all the answers but, the Bible does have all the answers. If you prefer to talk to some other brother, please do so; I am just concerned about your soul. In Christian love,

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GOSPEL MEETINGS

| <u>DATES</u> | <u>PLACE & TIME</u> | <u>SPEAKER</u> |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Oct. 3 – 8 | Ashlock Church near Celina, TN | Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL) |
| Oct. 7 – 10 | Load, KY | James McDonald (Woodbury, TN) |

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| Oct. 8 – 10 | Valley, AL 7:30pm (E.S.T.) Fr & Sa 11:00am (E.S.T.) Sun | Sam Dick (Cave City, KY) |
| Oct. 14 – 17 | Marrowbone Church near Burkesville, KY | Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL) |
| Oct. 15 – 17 | Van Lear, KY | Thad Eubank (Waynesboro, KY) |
| Oct. 18 – 22 | Goochtown, KY | Joe Hill (Hagerhill, KY) |
| Oct. 25 – 28 | Algood, TN | James McDonald (Woodbury, TN) |
| Oct. 25 – 31 | South Shore Church near Ashland, KY | Joe Hill (Hagerhill, KY) |
| Oct. 29 – 31 | Antioch Church Douglasville, GA | Bill Prince (Oxford, AL) |

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What name did the Lord give to Solomon?
2. How many men from each tribe did Joshua appoint to a map-making committee?
3. What was the emotional response of the disciples when Jesus said one of them would betray Him?
4. In the book of Revelation, those who were spared from the tribulation had their robes washed in what to make them white?
5. What was the test of unfaithfulness for wives as found in Numbers 5?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. What king of what country began the return of the Jewish exiles to Jerusalem? CYRUS, KING OF PERSIA (2 Chr. 36:22)
2. According to Isaiah, God has abandoned his people because they are filled with superstitions and influences from which direction? THE EAST (Isa. 2:6)
3. By what is a tree known? ITS OWN FRUIT (Lk. 6:44)
4. What is called the faithful witness in heaven in Psalm 89? THE MOON (Psa. 89:37)
5. What did David do with the head of Goliath? TOOK IT TO JERUSALEM (1 Sam. 17:54)