

The Bible our Guide

Plain Scriptural teaching for followers of Christ

FOREWORD

CHRISTADELPHIANS (brothers and sisters in Christ) became known by this name over 125 years ago, but their aim is to live by faith in Jesus Christ, according to the teaching of his followers from the first century AD, finding their instruction in a wholly inspired Bible.

They believe that those who follow Jesus and his apostles now, looking to him for strength and forgiveness from God, may confidently place their hope in his return to the earth, when he will bring eternal life to his people, and establish in power the long-promised kingdom of God.

The statements in this pamphlet are deliberately challenging, asking every reader to compare his own opinions with the plain teaching of scripture, examining carefully the Bible passages offered as proof. If, as a result, a change of mind and heart is called for, there will be no doubt that the teaching of the Lord, and the Book he trusted, must be followed wherever it leads.

The scripture quotations in this pamphlet are taken from the New King James (also known as the Revised Authorised) Version of the Bible.

THE BIBLE

If we claim to follow Christ we should trust in the Scriptures as confidently as Jesus and his apostles did:

Jesus:

“The Scripture cannot be broken.” (John 10:35)

Paul:

“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)

Peter:

“For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21)

Peter:

“The things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.” (1 Peter 1:12)

True faith must be founded on a fully inspired Bible.

HUMAN NATURE

If we claim to follow Christ we should admit that we are sinful and dying creatures, without hope of life except in Christ:

Moses:

öDust you are, and to dust you shall return.ö (Genesis 3:19)

Isaiah:

öAll flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades.ö (Isaiah 40:6,7)

James:

öFor what is your life? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.ö (James 4:14)

Peter:

öAll flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away.ö (1 Peter 1:24)

The Bible makes it plain that we are mortal: only when we admit this can we truly look forward to the salvation it offers.

THE FUTURE OF THE RIGHTEOUS

If we claim to follow Christ we should admit that our reward is to be looked for on the earth, not in heaven:

The Psalms:

öBut the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.ö (Psalm 37:11; Matthew 5:5)

Jesus:

öAnd have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.ö (Revelation 5:10)

Daniel:

öThe stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth í In the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.ö (Daniel 2:35,44)

öThe greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.ö (Daniel 7:27)

The Psalms:

“The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord’s; but the earth he has given to the children of men.” (Psalm 115:16)

John:

“No man has ascended to heaven but he who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.” (John 3:13)

The Bible tells us that the reward is at present reserved in heaven with Christ, to be revealed on earth at his coming:

Peter:

“An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you – salvation ready to be *revealed* in the last time – and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be *brought to you* at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:4,5,13)

Paul:

“For our citizenship is in heaven, *from which* we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body.” (Philippians 3:20,21)

The Bible tells us that the earth, where God placed men in the beginning, is the place where they will receive His blessing.

THE STATE OF THE DEAD

If we claim to follow Christ we should recognise that the grave is a place of unconsciousness, which only resurrection can bring to an end:

The Psalms:

“For in death there is no remembrance of you; in the grave who will give you thanks?” (Psalm 6:5)

Hezekiah:

“For Sheol cannot thank you, death cannot praise you; those who go down to the pit cannot hope for your truth.” (Isaiah 38:18)

Peter:

“David, that is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day – For David did not ascend into the heavens.” (Acts 2:29,34)

Paul:

“And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.” (1 Corinthians 15:17-19)

The grave, and the hell of the Old Testament, are the same word and the same place. It is to this place of oblivion that all the dead must go.

THE RETURN OF CHRIST TO THE EARTH

If we claim to follow Christ we should join all his early disciples in looking for his second coming:

Jesus:

“The Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him.” (Matthew 25:31)

Angels:

“This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11)

Peter:

“And that (God) may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before.” (Acts 3:20)

Paul:

“For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

Only by his second coming can Christ complete the work he began when he came before.

JESUS THE KING

If we claim to follow Christ we shall be sure that our Lord Jesus Christ, on his return, is to be King over the earth:

The Angel Gabriel:

“He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” (Luke 1:32,33)

Jesus:

“Do not swear by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.” (Matthew 5:34,35)

Jeremiah:

“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgement and righteousness in the earth. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is his name by which he will be called: The Lord our Righteousness.” (Jeremiah 23:5,6)

Zechariah:

“And in that day his feet will stand on the mount of Olives í And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be ó -The Lord is oneø and his name one.” (Zechariah 14:4,9)

Paul:

“Because (God) has appointed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all, by raising him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31)

Only by the righteous reign of Jesus over the earth will it be possible for God to fill the whole earth with His glory.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

If we claim to follow Christ we can rejoice in the knowledge that God will establish His kingdom in power over the earth:

Daniel:

“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” (Daniel 2:44)

Jesus:

“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever í We give you thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the one who is and who was and who is to come, because you have taken your great power and reigned.” (Revelation 11:15,17)

God is truly the ruler over all His universe:

The Psalms:

“The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.” (Psalm 103:19)

Daniel:

“The Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever he chooses í his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation.” (Daniel 4:25,34)

He once established His kingdom in Israel, and removed it because of His people's wickedness:

Moses:

“If you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Exodus 19:5,6)

David:

“Blessed are you, Lord God of Israel, our Father, for ever and ever. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head over all. Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father, and prospered.” (1 Chronicles 29:10,11,23)

Ezekiel:

“Now to you, O profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, whose iniquity shall end, thus saith the Lord God: Remove the turban, and take off the crown. Overthrown, overthrown, I will make it overthrown! It shall be no longer, until he comes whose right it is, and I will give it to him.” (Ezekiel 21:25-27)

When Jesus re-establishes the kingdom, rebellious Israel must repent, and the unrepentant will be rejected:

Zechariah:

“Then they will look on me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for him as one mourns for his only son.” (Zechariah 12:10; see Revelation 1:7)

Jesus:

“There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.” (Luke 13:28)

Jesus will establish his kingdom by subduing the nations, and moreover the nation which crucified him will need to submit.

THE SOURCE OF SIN

If we claim to follow Christ we shall acknowledge that sin springs from the human heart, and find in mankind the “devil” who is at enmity against God:

Jeremiah:

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” (Jeremiah 17:9)

James:

“But each one is tempted when he is drawn away of his own desires, and enticed.” (James 1:14)

Hebrews:

“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared in the same, that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” “But now, once at the end of the ages, he has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Hebrews 2:14; 9:26)

Jesus:

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.” (Mark 7:21-23)

Paul:

“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, evil, murders, drunkenness, revels, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practise such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:19-21)

The Bible traces the origin of human sinfulness to the fall of man in Eden, and only by the redeeming work of Jesus on the cross can this “devil” be destroyed.

GOD, JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

If we claim to follow Christ we shall, with Jesus our Lord, acknowledge the supremacy of God, the Father; we shall see in Jesus His obedient Son; and we shall see in the Holy Spirit His personal power:

Paul:

“There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 2:5)

“The head of Christ is God.” (1 Corinthians 11:3)

“Now when all things are made subject to him, then the Son himself will also be subject to him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” (1 Corinthians 15:28)

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Ephesians 4:4-6)

Jesus:

“My Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28)

“The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do.” (John 5:19)

“If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.” (John 15:10)

“Nevertheless not my will, but yours, be done.” (Luke 22:42)

The Angel Gabriel:

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that holy one who is to be born will be called the Son of God.” (Luke 1:35)

Peter:

“Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21)

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.” (Acts 10:38)

The Bible traces everything to God, that is, to the Father; it centres all the purpose of God in Jesus, that is, the Son; and it reveals God’s working among prophets, apostles and saints by His own power, that is, the Holy Spirit.

FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

If we claim to follow Christ we shall know that faith in Jesus is essential. A Christian must accept the true gospel before he can belong to Christ:

Jesus:

“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

“For if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins.” (John 8:24)

Paul:

“For (the gospel of Christ) is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 1:16; 10:9)

Hebrews:

“But without faith it is impossible to please him, for he who comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6)

and, as a warning against false teaching:

Paul:

“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach any gospel to you other than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.” (Galatians 1:8)

or against simply following the majority:

Jesus:

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” (Matthew 7:13,14)

The Bible does not allow us to take salvation for granted. The only way for sinners is to follow in obedience where Jesus has led, in faith in him and in the word of God he honoured.

TAKING UP THE CROSS

If we claim to follow Christ we shall want to renounce the weakness and pride of our fleshly nature, and lay it down after the pattern of Jesus’ death on the cross:

Jesus:

“If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24)

Paul:

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who $\acute{\iota}$ humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted him and given him the name which is above every name.” (Philippians 2:5-11)

“Our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with.” (Romans 6:6)

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” “And those who are Christ $\acute{\alpha}$ s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” “God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Galatians 2:20; 5:24; 6:14)

Jesus:

“These are the ones who $\acute{\iota}$ washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Revelation 7:14)

By his death on the cross Jesus destroyed the power of sin, and is now perfect and immortal. Those who crucify their old way of life with Christ and seek to follow him, will receive his help to the same end.

TRUE BAPTISM

If we claim to follow Christ we shall know that we must obey the command of Jesus, to follow our faith by baptism:

Jesus:

“Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.” Then Jesus, when he had been baptized, came up immediately from the water and suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (Matthew 3:15-17)

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:16)

“Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5)

Peter:

“Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” Then those who gladly received his word were baptized and they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. (Acts 2:38,41,42)

Paul:

“As many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. Therefore we were buried with him through baptism into death.” (Romans 6:3,4)

In the Bible, baptism is a burial in water, undertaken by those who have confessed their desire to crucify and bury their former lives, and start again in a risen life with Christ.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

If we claim to follow Christ we shall want to follow the pattern of Jesus’ life, keep his commandments, remember his death, and keep unspotted from the world:

Jesus:

“If you love me, keep my commandments.” “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another.” (John 14:15; 13:34)

“Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.” (Matthew 26:52)

John:

“Do not love the world or the things in the world.” For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 John 2:15,16)

Paul and Jesus:

“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me. In the same manner he also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till he comes.” (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

The Bible therefore encourages true Christians to remember the Lord in a regular breaking of bread, and to keep him constantly in remembrance in their lives, waiting always for his coming again.

RESURRECTION AND JUDGEMENT

If we claim to follow Christ we shall know that one day we must stand before the Lord Jesus Christ as our Judge, to receive blessing or condemnation:

Jesus:

“Every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgement. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Matthew 12:36,37)

Paul:

“For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Daniel:

“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.” (Daniel 12:2)

Jesus:

“I and your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that you should reward your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth.” (Revelation 11:18)

Paul:

“There will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgement to come, Felix was afraid.” (Acts 24:15,25)

Peter:

“They (who walk in the lusts of men) will give an account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.” (1 Peter 4:5)

Those who have understood their duty to God, whether they have accepted it and obeyed in faith, or rejected or neglected it, must stand before the Lord's judgement, for blessing or for rejection.

Jesus:

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And he will set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 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.” (Matthew 25:31-41)

“It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.” (Mark 9:43-48)

The hell fire of the Bible is the destruction of everything which is displeasing in God's sight at a time of judgement. It is also called “everlasting fire” and “the lake of fire”.

THE GLORIOUS END

If we claim to follow Christ we shall look to the time when the earth will be perfected through the work of Christ, and filled with God's glory:

To Moses:

“But truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.” (Numbers 14:21)

The Psalms:

“Give the king your judgements, O God, and your righteousness to the king's Son. He will judge your people with righteousness. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only does wondrous things! And blessed be his glorious name for ever! And let the whole earth be filled with his glory.” (Psalm 72:1,18,19)

Isaiah:

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:9)

Habakkuk:

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Habakkuk 2:14)

Paul:

“Then comes the end, when he (Christ) delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when he puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.” (1 Corinthians 15:24-26)

Jesus:

“Then death and Hades (the grave) were cast into the lake of fire.” “Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” (Revelation 20:14; 21:3,4)

Thus the Bible shows how the perfection intended in the work of creation will finally be realised, in the presence of all the true saints of God.

More detailed studies on Bible topics can be found in the booklets listed on the index.

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