

# Expository Files

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*EF 15.11*  
*Nov. 2008*

## Front Page

### **We Are Christians First** **Warren E. Berkley**

**Are you a Christian?** If you are, that relationship to God should govern everything you do about everything, all the time. When you first obeyed Christ in baptism, you were making the commitment to be a Christian and to be a Christian first.

**You have a job, but you are a Christian first.** Everything you do as an employee should be governed by your higher calling. "...obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God," (Col. 3:22).

**You are a neighbor, but you are a Christian first.** Your treatment of your neighbor should be based on your love for the God who made your neighbor (Jas. 3:9; Matt. 22:36-40).

**You are a member of a local church, hopefully, one that exists and works with full respect for the teachings of Scripture.** Your ultimate loyalty is to Jesus Christ, the head of the universal church (Eph. 1:22-23). If there is ever a conflict between the group and the Head, your commitment is to the Head (Col. 2:19).

**You may be a citizen of the United States, but you hold higher citizenship in Christ's kingdom (Col. 1:13; Phil. 1:27, 3:30).** Our higher citizenship should rule over all our involvement in our American citizenship. Everything we do as good citizens here should be a function of our higher citizenship.

In all that we do, we are Christians first. Our relationship to God through Jesus Christ ought to empower and enable all that we do from baptism until death. Our first identity is, a Christian.

*"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you," Matt. 6:33.*

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**Belshazzar - "Weighed In The Balances And Found Wanting"**  
**(Daniel chapter five)**  
**Warren E. Berkley**

King Belshazzar is one of the tragic figures of Old Testament history. His story should impress us with the moral degeneracy that can result when God is not honored. His story is told in Daniel chapter five.

**1. He didn't learn important lessons from the experience of Nebuchadnezzar.** King Nebuchadnezzar was taken into exile until "he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will," (Dan. 5:21). He came out of that humiliation confessing the sovereignty of God. "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble," (Dan. 4:37). Belshazzar "knew all this," but it prompted no humility or reverence for God.

**2. Belshazzar threw a huge drinking party.** He "drank wine in front" of a thousand. "Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may run after strong drink, who tarry late into the evening as wine inflames them . . . Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink..." (Isa. 5:11.22). Belshazzar did

all of this on the eve of his nation's end. They were feasting on the brink of the grave.

**3. He was absorbed in idolatry.** At this drinking party, he "commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. Then they brought in the golden vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his lords, his wives and his concubines drank from them. They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone." (Dan. 5:2-4) "What fools these idolaters were for praising and worshiping the creation rather than the Creator," (McGuiggan).

**4. Belshazzar - when he saw the "handwriting on the wall," called on the Chaldean "interpreters" who could not see, hear or know anything.** These men were frauds. On two earlier occasions (Daniel 2 & 4), they failed to provide any insight. Daniel "had understanding in all visions and dreams," (Dan. 1:17). Ignoring this, Belshazzar called the frauds in again. Only when advised by the Queen, was the man of God called in. This is one reason why Belshazzar was "weighed in the balances and found wanting." "That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed," (Dan. 5:30).

Belshazzar's behavior was exceptionally arrogant and irreverent. He is an example to us of what happens when the heart is not humbled before God. To avoid this tragedy, "praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble," (Dan. 4:37).

*In 1957, a popular song writer and singer wrote the following:*

Well, the bible tells us about a man  
Who ruled Babylon and all its land.  
Around the city, he built a wall  
And declared that Babylon would never fall.

He had concubines and wives,  
He called his Babylon "Paradise."  
On his throne he drank and ate,  
but for Belshazar it was gettin' late.

For he was weighed in the balance and found wanting,  
His kingdom was divided, couldn't stand.  
He was weighed in the balance and found wanting,  
His houses were built upon the sand.

Well, the people feasted and drank their wine  
And praised the false gods of his time.  
All holy things they scorned and mocked,  
But suddenly all their mocking stopped.  
For on the wall, there appeared a hand,  
Nothin' else, there was no man.  
In blood the hand began to write,  
And Belshazar couldn't hide his fright.

For he was weighed in the balance and found wanting,  
His kingdom was divided, couldn't stand.  
He was weighed in the balance and found wanting,  
His houses were built upon the sand.

Well, no one around could understand  
What was written by the mystic hand.  
Belshazar tried, but couldn't find  
A man who could give him peace of mind.  
But Daniel, the prophet, a man of God,  
He saw the writing on the wall in blood.  
Belshazar asked him what it said,  
And Daniel turned to the wall and read:

"My friend, you're weighed in the balance and found wanting,  
Your kingdom is divided, it can't stand.

You're weighed in the balance and found wanting,  
Your houses are built upon the sand." *Johnny Cash*

**“The Temple Of God”**  
**“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God ...”**  
**1 Corinthians 3:16**

Kyle Campbell

Every so often, it is beneficial for us to look deeper into the text of the Bible. Although it is not necessary for one to be a student of the languages of the Bible in order to understand it, a cursory examination can instill within us a vividness and appreciation for the Holy Spirit-inspired words. There has been some confusion surrounding 1 Corinthians 3:16. The confusion arises when trying to determine if Paul meant individual Christians (their physical bodies) or the entire church when he referred to the “temple.” A brief study will show that Paul was paying a very large compliment to God’s people as he was attempting to teach the Corinthian brethren the importance of the temple of God.

*Naos*, which is the word for “temple,” is in the nominative case. The nominative case is generally used to indicate the subject of a sentence or a predicate nominative (the object of a linking verb or verb of being). This, along with the word order (subject-verb) in the clause, shows that *naos* receives the emphasis. Another significant term is *oidate* which is a perfect-active-indicative with the meaning “to know.” Rienecker says, “The negative (*ouk oidate*) introducing the question expects the answers yes” (p. 395). The International Critical Commentary states that the “question implies a rebuke. The Corinthians are so carnal that they have never grasped, or have failed to retain, so fundamental a doctrine as that of the indwelling of the Spirit” (p. 66). *Oidate* is also plural, which indicates that the word represents the entire body of Christians at Corinth.

“Temple” as an anarthrous or a word without the definite article. This would render “temple” as “a temple” instead of a specific temple. The International Critical Commentary says that it is “not ‘a

temple of God,' but 'God's temple'" (p. 66). Vine states that *naos* means a "shrine or sanctuary" (p. 1138). It generally denoted the inner sanctuary where only the priests could go. Rienecker adds that *naos* means "temple, dwelling place of a deity, the inward shrine or sanctuary. The reference is to the one temple of Jerusalem and there may be an allusion to the dissensions which are corrupting God's temple" (p. 395).

Thayer gives the definition of *naos* as "the temple at Jerusalem, but only of the sacred edifice (or sanctuary) itself, consisting of the Holy place and the Holy of holies" (p. 422). He further adds that *naos* is used metaphorically of a "company of Christians" (p. 422). Earle says, "In a sense it could be said that the Christians together constituted God's dwelling place in Corinth. What a high view of the local church" (p. 221)!

*Naos* occurs 46 times in the New Testament. It is used figuratively in several different fashions in the New Testament: in Acts 17:24, it is used as an idolatrous shrine; in Luke 1:9, 21-22, it is used as the temple sanctuary; in John 2:19, it is used of Christ's physical body; in Ephesians 2:21 and 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, it is used of the church; and in Revelation 21:22, it is used of the God and Christ as the temple in the New Jerusalem.

A significant synonym for "temple" in the New Testament is *hieron*. This term is used 70 times in the New Testament; however, it is never used figuratively. Vine says this term signified the "entire building with its precincts" (p. 1138). Thayer adds that *hieron* designates "the whole compass of the sacred enclosure, embracing the entire aggregate of buildings, balconies, porticoes, courts (viz. that of the men or Israelites, that of the women, that of the priests), belonging to the temple" (p. 299). All of the occurrences are in the gospels and Acts, with the exception of one occurrence in 1 Corinthians 9:13. We read of Christ teaching "in the temple" (Matthew 26:55; Luke 11:37; John 8:20), but we sometimes do not realize how long discussions could have occurred without interrupting the temple service. This "temple" is the *hieron*, the porches and porticoes surrounding the Holy Place. The Lord never entered the *naos* the

during His time on earth; nor, being “made under the law” (Galatians 4:4), could He have done so, because the right to enter was reserved for the priests.

The use of *naos* in 1 Corinthians 3:16 to represent the Lord’s church is truly special. The International Critical Commentary says, “As a metaphor for the Divine indwelling, the ‘naos,’ which contained the Holy of Holies, is more suitable than ‘hieron,’ which included the whole of the sacred enclosure” (p. 66). Paul uses this term to show the deep nature of God’s relationship to His church. He dwells in the temple of the heart, a “Most Holy Place” if you will, not in temples made with hands (Acts 17:24). When Christians follow the truth, God dwells in us richly and we are a “*spiritual house*” offering “*spiritual sacrifices*” to God (1 Peter 2:5). The Jew looked upon the tabernacle and temple with great respect, and Christians should have the same respect for the church.

## **“I Don't See How It's Going to Work, But I'll Give It All I Got!”**

**John 6:1-14**

**By Jon W. Quinn**

Two of the terms used to describe God in the Scriptures are “Almighty” and “All powerful.” Sometimes, we use the term “omnipotent” which means the same thing. But do we believe it? To what degree? Are we willing to put our trust in the One who cannot be defeated?

The title of this article is a paraphrase of the attitude expressed by Andrew, the apostle and brother of Peter, on one occasion during the ministry of Jesus. I would like for us to notice this event and draw some lessons from it to our own discipleship today.

### **Dinnertime!**

“After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias). And a great multitude was following Him,

because they were seeing the signs which He was performing on those who were sick. And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. Jesus therefore lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great multitude was coming to Him, said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?' And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do. Philip answered Him, 'Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little.' One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, 'There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?' Jesus said, 'Have the people sit down.' Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted. And when they were filled, He said to His disciples, 'Gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost.' And so they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten. When therefore the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, 'This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world.'" (John 6:1-14).

### **The Test**

"And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do." (John 6:6). Jesus was testing Philip when He had asked him where they were going to find food to purchase for the great multitude of people. Philip's reply was essentially that even if enough food could be found they did not have nearly enough funds to purchase the amount it would take to feed everybody. Philip evidently did not think the "Almighty" was "mighty" enough to handle this situation. Philip's problem is quite common.

Philip could not figure out how the Lord was going to accomplish the task. But this does not mean He won't. We must be careful not to limit our estimates of success in anything which has to



do with the Lord's work and will. The God who can, after all, part the Red Sea, will do what He determines to do in the way He determines to do it. If He says, "Baptism now saves you." (1 Peter 3:20,21) then it does.

Andrew is more flexible than Philip. In verse 9, he advises that there is a little food around. He says, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?" That's much better. Andrew offers the Lord all he can find, and though he admits he doesn't know how it's going to work, at least he offers whatever he can to help. Jesus then told His apostles to have the people sit down and the rest is history. The people were fed and the miracle had it's intended effect, that being to give evidence that Jesus was really from God. "When therefore the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, 'This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world.'" (John 6:14; cf. John 20:30,31).

### **The Multitudes**

It is sad that many of these same people later get sidetracked from the importance of Jesus' true mission and the true significance of the miracle He had done. The significance was that Jesus had "the words of life" and they needed to find redemption from sins. They were more focused on the food.

They decided that they would like Jesus to be their king. "Jesus therefore perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone." (John 6:15). While one can certainly understand the value of having such a king, that is not the kind of king Jesus came to be. He came to establish a spiritual kingdom, which He did; not a physical kingdom like they wanted (John 18:36; Colossian 1:13).

When Jesus sought to further adjust the crowds thinking, encouraging them to be more interested in spiritual food for their souls, they objected (John 6:22-27; 41-45). Sadly, when Jesus refuses to appeal to their desires, many of them withdraw. They had been so close to eternal life, and yet so far away (John 6:66-68).

## **Application of the Principle**

We have noticed several important points in looking at this event in the life of Christ. Consider the following application for our discipleship today. There are many more that could be made, but we will just note a few that relate to our evangelism.

First, it is going to take faith and commitment on our parts. We can either sit and do nothing, and, like Philip, only think in terms of why we cannot or will not be involved and have success or we can be like Andrew and say "I don't see how it's going to work, but I'll give it all I got!" Now, which of these approaches do you think will find success and be pleasing to the Lord?

Secondly, we need to understand that God can accomplish wonders with anyone! If we allow the Lord's will to become ours, and seek to accomplish His work as we allow Him to direct our lives, then good success will result in some form or another, even if it only be in hearing His words "Well done!" at the judgment.

Finally, notice how Jesus would not change His mission from spiritual food to physical food even though it would have been popular for Him to do so. Nor should we alter the nature of the gospel. We should not change the church's tasks and missions as assigned by the Lord. We should never be satisfied with only halfway commitment on our parts to His work. The most wonderful significance of the feeding of the five thousand was, and is, Jesus is the Son of God.

## **If You Abide In My Word**

**John 8:31**

**By Jonathan L. Perz**

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed" (John 8:31).

In this statement, Jesus not only defines one of the terms of discipleship, but impresses upon the believer the importance of His word.

### **True Discipleship**

“If” is a critical word in the understanding of any statement. It is a word that places a condition upon the statement that follows or precedes. In this case, a condition is placed upon true discipleship. In order to be His disciples, we must abide in His word. If we do not abide in His word, are we truly His disciples?

### **Abiding In His Word**

What does it mean to “abide in His word?” To “abide” means to continue in, not to depart from. Hence, we must continue in His word, or teachings, if we are to truly be His disciples.

A disciple is one who is taught, one who follows a discipline, or teaching of another. Therefore, it is fundamentally implied that unless we continue in Jesus’ teaching, we are not His disciples.

### **Disciples Indeed**

The word “indeed” means truly, of a truth, in reality, most certainly. Many profess to be a disciple, but not all are followers. Jesus asked, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). It follows that we cannot do what He says if we do not abide in His word.

The word “indeed” infers more than in thought. It infers action (deed). One must show His discipleship in action, not only in word.

### **Applications**

Many today profess to “follow Christ,” but practice things not taught in His word. If one were to assemble a panel of 10 “Christians” representing various “faiths” and they were all asked what one must do to be saved, what would the end result be?

Chances are some would state that you must believe, accept Jesus into your heart and say some version of a sinner's prayer. One might teach that you must be baptized in the Holy Spirit. One might propose that there is nothing you can do to be saved. Another might declare that you must be baptized, and then later confirmed into "The Church." Yet another would argue that you must be immersed in water for the remission of sins, having heard the gospel message, believed, repented, and confessed Christ as Lord. Still another would say, you must simply be a good person. One may cite the keeping of a specific doctrine regarding the day of worship, while another may cite the importance of attending church.

The problem is obvious. Some of these "Christians" are not disciples indeed. How do we discern who is and who is not? Which answer is correct and which is error? What is the measure by which we may know?

As a disciple indeed, who abides in Christ's word, every action should be based on a book, chapter and verse (Colossians 3:17). A disciple indeed will pay careful attention not to twist or wrest His word by his own understanding (2 Peter 3:16). Furthermore, a disciple indeed will want to be extremely careful not to transgress (go beyond) or omit (fall short of) any aspect of His teaching (2 John 9-10; Revelation 22:18-19).

A disciple indeed will not seek a passage to prove a position, but rather base a position on the whole of God's teaching on a given matter (Acts 20:27). A disciple indeed will be studious and diligent to present themselves approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). He will not be willing to base his faith on what everyone else is practicing or doing, but accept no other foundation but the word of God (Luke 6:46-49). He will prove all things, test the spirits, search the scriptures daily, and examine himself (1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1; Acts 17:10; 2 Corinthians 13:5).

All of this emphasizes the premium that Jesus placed upon His word, His teaching, and His doctrine. His word is the measure by which we shall be judged (John 12:48). His word is the authority for all that we say and do (Matthew 28:18; Colossians 3:17). His word, His gospel, is the basis of our salvation (Romans 1:16; Ephesians 1:13; 1 Peter 1:22-25; James 1:21).

To answer the question posed earlier, the measure by which we may know how to be saved is God's word, and God's word alone. Jesus concludes the statement—which is the basis for this article—by saying, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

God's word is truth (John 17:17). Despite men's best intentions and best efforts to obfuscate, twist, pervert, hide, rationalize, render obsolete, marginalize, and re-characterize God's truth to conform to some modern standard or idea—they will never succeed. For what is written is written in heaven (Revelations 20:12) and will be there just as it was originally given in that final day.

Therefore, our only hope is to "abide in His word" and be His "disciples indeed" knowing "the truth" which shall "make [us] free."

Topic Page:

## **A Faith Strengthened by Doubt**

Gary Henry

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." **Luke 22:31,32**

**Doubt is not necessarily the enemy of faith.** When we pass through the wastelands of doubt and our faith falters, or

perhaps even fails, it is possible to experience that doubt in such a way that our faith later becomes more vibrant. And a faith that has been invigorated in this way is not only of more value to ourselves, it is of exceedingly more value to those around us.

Kahlil Gibran, the Syrian-born mystic poet, said, "Doubt is a pain too lonely to know that faith is his twin brother." When we reflect on the matter, we realize that this is true. Both faith and doubt deal with the unseen. They both confront questions that, at least for the time being, have no complete answer. In the face of these questions, faith mellows our doubt with reverence and gratitude, and doubt makes our faith more experienced and mature. It is doubt, properly dealt with, that takes our faith out of the nursery and into the real world.

The person who has never doubted may have a faith that is quite genuine; his or her faith may, in fact, please God. But relatively speaking, that person's faith requires less *trust* than that of the one who has survived seasons of doubt.

To see this point, compare faith to courage. Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the doing of what is right while one is *experiencing* fear. While it may be possible to speak of the courage of one who has never faced any significant danger and therefore has never had much *reason* to be afraid, how much more admirable is the bravery of the person who has really struggled (and not always successfully) against both danger and fear! Similarly, those who know the most about faith are often those who have had the most experience with doubt.

Real faith has no need to pretend or to run away from difficulty. Instead, faith embraces doubt with honesty, recognizing that troubling questions are inevitable in a world where our sins have hidden God's face from us. Doubts are what make faith, faith.

*Isolation has led me to reflection, reflection to doubt, doubt to a more sincere and intelligent love of God.*

*Marie Leneru*

## **Plan of Salvation** **By Jon W. Quinn**

### Plan #1

Announced by the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to new believers in Christ who asked what they must do:

Acts 2:36-38

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ -- this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

(Acts 2:36-38).

### Plan #2

On the back page of a tract, sinners were urged to pray this prayer to be saved. This prayer is not found in the Bible; nor were alien sinners commanded to pray for their forgiveness.

The Sinner's Prayer:

"O' Lord, I accept that I am a sinner and that Jesus died for my sins. I now accept Him into my heart as Lord and Savior asking for your mercy and forgiveness in His name. Amen."

The editors of Expository Files are happy with plan #1 and thankful to the God of all grace for it. We cannot recommend Plan #2 at all, but will change our minds when this prayer can be shown to us in the Bible.

**The Enemy Commander**  
**The Final Page; 15.11**  
**By Jon W. Quinn**

The Bible says, "For though we walk according to the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful..." (2 Cor. 10:3,4).

Here, the Bible suggests that the Christian is at war, but that the conflict is of a spiritual nature. It is a spiritual battle waged within the human heart. We are therefore urged to put on "the whole armor of God" which, again, is spiritual armor, so that we may stand against Satan. This armor consists of truth, righteousness and the gospel of peace. Faith is said to be our shield, our helmet is salvation, and our sword is the word of God (Eph. 6:11-17).

Do not underestimate the consequences of letting down your guard and losing the war. Defeat is final. Fortunately, even though we may lose some battles, we can still win the war. As Satan approaches this conflict with you, he will look for a weak place where he can attack. He might try to create doubt or dissatisfaction within you, suggesting that the Lord's commandments are not necessary or wise. He might try to hinder you from doing what you know is right. He might suggest that living to please God is impossible and thus demoralize you.



The bottom line: do not compromise with the Destroyer. Fight the good fight. Keep the faith. Finish the course.