

THE PASSION OF CHRIST

John Edwards

The book of Acts begins with these words: *“The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom he shewed himself alive after his **passion** by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God”* (Acts 1:1-3). This brief article calls our attention to four things about the passion or suffering of Christ.

THE PASSION WAS PROPHESED. The prophets *“... testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow”* (1 Pet. 1:11). In Isaiah 53, the heart of all prophecy, the Messianic prophet foretold the sufferings of Christ. Acts 3:18 reveals, *“But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.”* Fulfilled prophecy is one of the greatest evidences of the inspiration of the Bible.

THE PASSION WAS

VOLUNTARY. Jesus said, *“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again”* (Jn. 10:17-18). The life of Jesus was voluntarily given for us. Paul wrote, *“...Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us...”* (Eph. 5:2).

THE PASSION WAS AN ACT OF DIVINE LOVE. *“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins”* (1 Jn. 4:9-10).

THE PASSION WAS THE PRICE FOR SIN. *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom. 5:8). Man, alienated from God by sin, is reconciled unto God by the death of Christ on the cross (Col. 1:20-24; Eph. 2:13, 16).

When you think of all that Christ did for you, are you willing to give yourself to Him in faith, repentance, baptism and faithful living?

RELICS OF ROME

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Many of the teachings and practices found in the Protestant denominations are simply relics of Rome. This writing calls attention to some innovations that have been adopted and borrowed from Roman Catholicism.

MECHANICAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP. The mechanical instrument was first introduced in 670 A.D. by pope Vitalian I, and did not become the general practice of the Catholic Church until 800 A.D. The practice was staunchly opposed by Luther, Wesley, and Calvin. Martin Luther, founder of the Lutheran Church, called it an “ensign of Baal”. John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, said he had no objection to it “provided it is neither heard nor seen”. John Calvin, founder of the Presbyterian Church, said “the Catholics foolishly borrowed it from the Jews.” The Protestants borrowed it from the Catholics and the Christian Church borrowed it from the Protestants, but the New Testament church never had it (Mt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; Jas. 5:13). Produce one passage of Scripture where Christ or the apostles ever commanded its use or the church ever employed its use

in worship unto God.

(scripture?)

SPRINKLING FOR BAPTISM.

The first man ever to have water sprinkled on him was Novatian, in the year 252 A.D., when the bishops of Rome authorized sprinkling in lieu of baptism because he was sick. In 1311, sprinkling was sanctioned by the pope and became an ordinance in the Roman Catholic Church. Sprinkling, practiced by the Protestant denominations, is therefore a relic of Rome. A careful and impartial reading of the following passages will show that immersion is the action of Bible baptism; not sprinkling or pouring. *“And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins”* (Mk. 1:5). *“And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized”* (Jn. 3:23). *“... Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water...”* (Mk. 1:9-10). *“...we are buried with him by baptism into death...”* (Rom. 6:4). *“Buried*

with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him...” (Col. 2:12). *“One Lord, one faith, one baptism”* (Eph. 4:5). Where is the Scripture where sprinkling of water was practiced in the New Testament?

(scripture?)

Who authorized your practice: the Lord of heaven or the pope of Rome?

WHEN YE READ

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Your attention is directed to basic rules in reading and understanding the Bible (Eph. 3:4).

CONSIDER WHO IS

SPEAKING. Who said, *“Ye shall not surely die”* in Genesis 3:4? Job’s wife said, *“curse God and die”* (Job 2:9). Is that good advice?

CONSIDER WHO IS BEING

SPOKEN TO. If I just read wherever the Bible falls open, and start doing what I read, without considering who is being spoken to, I might be found

making an ark (Gen. 6:14), offering my son (Gen. 22:2), keeping the sabbath day (Ex. 20:8), going to Jerusalem (Dt. 16:16), offering animal sacrifices (Lev. 1:1-3), or who knows what! Failing to realize who is being spoken to causes some in the religious world to obey commands not given to them and to expect promises not made to them!

READ EVERYTHING THE BIBLE SAYS ON A SUBJECT. The sum of God’s word is truth (Ps. 119:160). We do not have the truth, until we take everything the Lord said on a given subject. Some will read Romans 5:1 and conclude that we are justified by faith only, but a reading of other passages on the subject, like James 2:24 — *“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only”* — will not allow such a conclusion.

KEEP IT IN CONTEXT.

Without respect for the context one might teach: Judas went and hanged himself (Mt. 27:5), Jesus said, *“Go, and do thou likewise”* (Lk. 10:37) and *“That thou doest, do quickly”* (Jn. 13:27). One must rightly divide the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15)!

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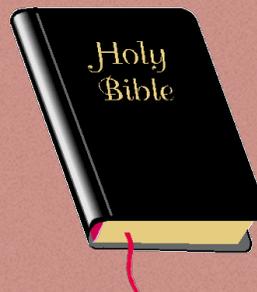
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