

# THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

July 6

2008

## FREEDOM

This past week, as our nation celebrated its independence, we heard much talk about **freedom**. Most of this talk has centered upon political freedom, but there is a freedom that is much more important than any political freedom that we may have.

Jesus told a group of Jews *"ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32). They denied being in bondage to any man but Jesus said, *"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin"* (John 8:34). Bondage to sin is far worse than any oppression that may come our way as a result of being in bondage to some man or nation.

Since bondage to sin is the worst bondage then freedom from that bondage must be the greatest freedom one could enjoy. Jesus said abiding in His word would result in knowing the truth and being made free (John 8:31,32).

Paul told the Roman Christians, *"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."* (Romans 6:16-18). These had demonstrated their faith by repenting of their sins and being baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3). In so doing they were freed from sin. Have you obtained that freedom?

✍ James Hahn

## Are the Gospel Writers Credible?

Generally speaking, skeptics assert that Jesus did not do the things recorded in the Gospel accounts; they simply invented the stories.

The writers of the Gospel accounts—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—quite definitely affirm that Jesus Christ claimed to be the Son of God, and that he performed miracles to authenticate that affirmation. Further, they allege that even though Jesus was put to death on the cross, after three days he came out of the grave, thus, forcefully demonstrating that he is Jehovah's beloved Son, and that his authority must be respected. There is really no dispute about what the record claims.

How do skeptics address these historical records? Generally speaking, they assert that the New Testament writers fabricated the accounts. The writers knew that Jesus did not do these things; they simply invented the stories. Will this charge stand up in the light of logical inquiry? Let us think about it for a moment.

Logically speaking, it is the case that either there is an eternity wherein one will give an account for the deeds of his life, or else there is no existence after death. The logical "law of the excluded middle"—a thing either is or it is not—demands this.

Now, reflect upon the implications of this principle in light of the charge that the New Testament writers lied about the events in the life of Christ. If they believed in eternity, why would they falsify the records regarding Jesus, knowing that such lies would exclude their entrance into heaven? Lying is well nigh universally conceded to be unethical.

On the other hand, if Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John did not believe in eternal accountability, and so callously fabricated the documents that affirmed Jesus' divine nature, why would they have subjected themselves to the persecution that accompanied Christianity—since this life would be all they believed they would ever enjoy?

It makes no sense at all. This is a problem that no skeptic can explain. The New Testament documents are reliable!

✍ Wayne Jackson

## IS THERE ONLY ONE WAY?

Recently a group known as the *Pew Forum* conducted a survey on "*Religion and Public Life*." I found their findings to be most interesting. In the summary of their findings they state, "*A strong majority of those who are affiliated with a religion, including majorities of nearly every religious tradition, do not believe their religion is the only way to salvation. And almost the same number believes that there is more than one true way to interpret the teachings of their religion.*"

This statement reflects the attitude that has been reflected by the religious world in general for many years. This attitude may appear to be a kind and considerate one upon first observation, however, it doesn't take much effort to realize just how foolish and inconsistent this view really is.

Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6). It is amazing that many of those who were surveyed claim belief in Jesus as their Savior. How can one claim belief in Jesus and deny this very plain statement of His.

If you are of the number who "*do not believe their religion is the only way to salvation*" then you are not a follower of Christ. He plainly states that **NO man** can come to the Father but by Him.

Several years ago when I lived near Miami, Florida, a gospel preacher was on one of the call-in interview programs on one of the local radio stations. Someone asked him if he believed that only Christians would be saved. In answer to the question he simply read the statement of Jesus in John 14:6. I was amazed at the number of "hate" calls his reply prompted. He was accused of being a "narrow-minded bigot" and so insensitive to the feelings and beliefs of others.

Even among those who claim to believe that Jesus is the only way to salvation we have the attitude manifested by many that says you do not really need to believe what Jesus says to have Him as your savior. Jesus asked, "*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*" (Luke 6:46).

Friends, you may be accused of being narrow-minded but if you believe Jesus there is salvation in no other name (Acts 4:12) and no one can be saved who does not believe and obey His will. (JH)

## Children Learn What They Live

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.  
If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.  
If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.  
If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves.  
If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.  
If children live with jealousy, they learn to feel envy.  
If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.  
If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.  
If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.  
If children live with praise, they learn appreciation.  
If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.  
If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.  
If children live with recognition, they learn it is good to have a goal.  
If children live with sharing, they learn generosity.  
If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.  
If children live with fairness, they learn justice.  
If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.  
If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and in those about them.  
If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.

Poem by *Dorothy Law Nolte*

### **Belleville church of Christ**

5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258

[www.bellevillechurch.net](http://www.bellevillechurch.net)

#### **Schedule of Services**

Sun. Bible Study. . . . . 9:30 a.m.  
Sun. Morning Worship. . . . . 10:30 a.m.  
Sun. Evening Worship. . . . . 5:00 p.m.  
Wed. Bible Study. . . . . 7:00 p.m.

#### **Elders**

Charles Carpenter. . . . . (317) 839-3873  
James Hahn. . . . . (317) 745-1507

#### **Deacons**

Leon Nevins. . . . . (317) 272-2966  
Don Perry. . . . . (765) 676-5825  
Alvin Stanley. . . . . (317) 831-3514  
Mike Thomas. . . . . (317) 539-2699

#### **Evangelist**

James Hahn. . . . . (317) 745-1507