

## It Is Written Again

By Hendrik Joubert

If you were to appear before God to be judged, would you prefer to take your stand based upon the words and interpretations of prominent religious leaders, or based upon the words of God as you are able to personally establish them from the Scriptures? (**Acts 17:11**) Few people would prefer the words of men. The question as well as the answer is not altogether simple, and the best way to illustrate this is by considering the temptation of Jesus – Satan quoted Scripture.

In an attempt to help you see the point I am trying to make I would like to focus our attention upon the words of the Lord as **Matthew** recorded them, and specifically after the devil's second attempt. Satan wanted Jesus to *test* the Father to see if He would live up to His word as he (Satan) quoted it. The quotation was correct and it is a statement of fact – nothing would happen to Jesus unless God allows it. Doing what the devil asked would suggest that Jesus did not have faith in the Father's words. Why would one want to *prove* something you are convinced of?

In His reply Jesus said "***It is written again...***" or "***also written***" (**Matthew 4:7**) as He pointed out that *testing*, or to ***tempt the Lord your God***, is prohibited. The devil chose to ignore this relevant passage because it suited his agenda. We may quote Scripture in the same way Satan did, to suit our agenda. Consider how often one hears Scripture quoted as people of different faiths are *defending* their belief. From the statement Jesus made we may learn that one should not reach a conclusion on any given subject until all relevant passages have been considered. Considering that a professional reader reads through the Bible in 72 hours this is not as difficult a task as we would first imagine.

Believing the words of a false teacher may result from a well prepared deception, however it may also simply be what we wanted to hear. Notice the following warning God issued through Paul in his letter to Timothy: ***For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;...*** (**2Timothy 4:3**)

It is important to notice that this warning was issued directly after the inspired writer declared the Scriptures to be the complete guide for anyone wishing to please God, and therefore also issued a stern exhortation that Timothy should be ready to preach it ***in season and out of season***; an idiomatic expression suggesting that it should be preached even when sinners do not consider the situation appropriate. (**2Timothy 3:16-4:2**)

The theme of the gospel of Jesus Christ is change, or repentance: ***Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.*** <sup>2</sup> ***And Jesus said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate?"*** <sup>3</sup> ***"I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.*** (**Luke 13:1-3**)

Because of the immense challenge this presents we tend to want to focus on the love and the grace of God rather than to, ***as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;*** <sup>15</sup> ***but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,...*** (**1Peter 1:14-15**) Because God explains that no one will be saved by the works of the law (**Galatians 2:16**) sinners are discouraged from ***obeying the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*** (**2Thessalonians 1:8; 1Peter 4:17**) It is this attitude which **James** addresses in chapter **2:14-26**.

If you needed to borrow money from a bank you are required to fill out an application. Writing on the paper may be considered a work, but no one would suggest that you have worked for and therefore deserve receiving the money as wages. The Bible teaches that baptism is ***for the remission of sins.*** (**Acts 2:38**) Through Peter we learn that it saves us because it is a *demand*, or *appeal* to God for a clear conscience. (**1Peter 3:21; ESV; NASB; Geneva; Darby; Afrikaans**)

Baptism is the way in which God decided a sinner should ask, or apply for the blood of Christ. (**Acts 22:16; Hebrews 9:13-14; 10:22; 1Corinthians 6:11**) Because there is an *action* involved, mostly by the one doing the baptizing, it is suggested that one would deserve salvation. Simple obedience to this act which demonstrates faith in what God said about it is discouraged, or the meaning and purpose changed.

What about the thief on the cross? ***It is written again***, in addition to what we have already noticed, that baptism is a burial with Christ, after which the believer is raised to walk in a new life. (**Romans 6:3-4; John 3:3-5**) In addition

to the Lord being there personally, he could not obey this command; even those who received the baptism of John had to submit to. (**Acts 19:1-5**)