

Rom. 14:19  
“So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.”

John 8:32  
“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”

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## WHAT'S THE MEANING OF LIFE

By Jefferson David Tant

One question I ask people I meet is, “What’s the meaning of life?” Often the response is the “deer in the headlights” look accompanied by the words “I don’t know. I’ve never thought about it.”

*Think.* Every created thing has a purpose. My pen has a purpose. My automobile has a purpose. I can misuse the purpose of each. I may use my car as a battering ram to take down an unwanted tree in my yard. In doing so, I will damage or even destroy my car by misusing its purpose.

As to the meaning of life, it can be stated simply: **Life is a preparation for eternity.** We were created in the image of God for a relationship with him, and God wants us with him in heaven. One day my heart will stop. Time and existence in this realm will have ceased, and eternity will have begun. I may spend 80-100 years on earth, but trillions and trillions of years in eternity. Well, that’s really not accurate, because time does not exist there, and I will live...well, **forever.**

Back to my car analogy. I typically keep a car for many years—maybe 10 years. Now, I may have a tree that needs to be removed *now*. So I take my year-old car and knock over the tree. Isn’t that a bit foolish, to destroy my car in order to satisfy a momentary need?

God is preparing us for life with him in eternity. Until we figure that out, life won’t make much sense. Life is a series of problems. Either you are having a problem now, or just coming out of one. If you have no problems, just be patient, they will come. Guaranteed! Dealing with problems develops character, and that sometimes hurts. But you cannot develop character without pain. In the same way, the body-builder has to

lift weights, do push-ups, etc. When he starts, it hurts. But it makes him stronger, and without the hurt, there is no strength. God is more interested in our character than our comfort. The goal is not bodybuilding, but character building—to become like Christ.

Life is not lived in the sun on the mountaintop. There are valleys and days of darkness. But no matter how dark the night is, there is always someone there to guide us safely through the darkness. His name is Jesus Christ. But there is a catch. We must put our trust in him and be willing to accept his guidance. He is not like a flashlight kept in the drawer just for emergencies. He must be a living presence in our lives. Many live their lives just for self, refuse to listen to God, and reject his teaching, and then wonder why he won’t answer their prayers when they have some crisis. **“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:9).**

No matter how bad things are, there are good things for which you can thank God. I encourage people who are really stressed out and depressed to make out a list of their problems, and then make out a list of the things for which they are thankful. The “good” list will outweigh the “bad list.” If you focus on your problems, you become self-centered and are a prime candidate for a “poor me pity party.” But if you focus on your purpose, you can overcome your self-centeredness. One has suggested that the way to dig yourself out of your problems is to find someone else with problems and help them dig themselves out. Thus you forget about your own.

We need to ask ourselves some hard questions. Am I living for myself? for possessions? for popularity? for pleasure? All these earthly things will come to an end one day, but my spiritual being will continue in eternity. *Am I investing for the future?* What drives me each day? Bitterness? Guilt? Hatred? Or fulfilling God's purpose in my life? Jesus said, "*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly*" (John 10:10). Satan is the thief who deceives us into thinking that what he gives us is good, but it is poison. God loves us, and only he can give us the abundant life. When you get up each morning, pray "God, if I don't get anything else done this day, help me to know you more, love you more and serve you better."

## The Deity and Humanity of Jesus

The Bible shows Jesus as both divine and human. Each is an invitation to unbelievers and an encouragement to disciples. In **Philippians 2:5-11** the apostle speaks of these two sides when he uses the Lord's humility as an example and encouragement for our own. "*Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, as He already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself by taking the form of a bondservant and being born in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross. For this reason also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*" (nasb).

We Must Understand Jesus as a Man.

1. To appreciate what He experienced, that His temptations were not as to an unfeeling robot or an alien Superman incapable of weakness.
2. To see no excuse for ourselves, knowing that if He overcame sin by willpower, not miraculous power, we are guilty when we do not.
3. To have an example for how to live, such that we learn to compare our living to no one but Him, letting Him show the way.

We Must Understand Jesus as God

1. To know where He came from, and to fully realize that He was not from earth or a creation of the minds of

men.

2. To see how horrible sin really is, by recognizing and appreciating the price it took for redemption from our sins.
3. To appreciate the greatest of loves, knowing God the Father gave His only Son so that we could be reconciled to Him.

Either side without the other is incomplete! Jesus of Nazareth is Jesus the Christ. The Son of Man is the Son of God. The Father's plan shows us both. "*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*" (Jn. 1:14). "*As the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage*" (Heb. 2:14,15).

R. Hines

## "Things Were Written Before"

By David Cox

*"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope"* (Romans 15:4)

It is no doubt that when Paul mentions the things "*written before*," he is referring to the Old Testament. Some have attempted to justify the authority of the Old Testament scriptures by using this verse.

### Is the Old Testament Still Binding?

If Paul intends that the Old Testament is still in force today (in the Dispensation of Christ), this verse would directly contradict other passages of Scripture. It is clear as Paul writes concerning Christ and the Old Testament, the Old Testament is not still the law. Notice what Paul says, "*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross*" (Colossians 2:14). Paul stated the purpose of the old law was "*our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith*" (Galatians 3:24). Paul continues in **verse 25**, "*But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*" There can be no doubt that Paul was speaking of the old law being brought to an end which is in keeping with what Christ said about the old law as he lived on this earth (Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44). Paul's statement, in **Romans 15:4**, was never intended to be used to justify

the practices of some, based on the authority of the Old Testament.

### **What We Should Gain From Paul's Statement.**

The question now is: What exactly did Paul say about the use of the Old Testament? He said it was for our learning so that those who suffer for righteousness will have hope. Notice what Paul says to Felix, *"But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and Prophets. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust"* (Acts 24:14-15). Notice that Paul said he believed all that was "written in the Law and Prophets." Paul stated he had hope as those before him had. Those before him as Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, etc., looked by faith to the coming promise of God, so did Paul. In **Romans 15:4**, Paul is saying, so should we! Think of Job and Daniel suffering because of their trust and faith in God. These examples should admonish (comfort) us to live lives that will be acceptable to God, our Father. Thinking of the promises given to Abraham and the faithfulness of God in fulfilling them should help us to recognize that God *"is not slack concerning His promise as some count slackness, but is longsuffering"* (2 Peter 3:9). Men may say the world has not ended yet, and that they desire to enjoy the pleasures of sin. However, Paul is reminding us that the lessons written of the days beforehand are invaluable to us as we live our lives by faith, trusting in the promises of God.

There are many lessons we can gain from the Old Testament that can give us comfort and hope. But **Romans 15:4** should never be used to try to give authority to the Old Testament Scriptures for today.

### **Is the Church Free From the World?**

When recounting the history of this nation, we often reflect on the toughness our ancestors had it when they took their stand against the King and declared themselves to be free from his rule. It required great courage and a willingness to actually die for the principles upon which they relied.

Hard work and devotion to the very concepts of freedom were necessary as a people. When we say as a people, we mean to include everyone. It demanded a nation full of hard working committed people to bring about the great success we have experienced.

Men fought for the freedom they chose and many died with families waiting at home for them. It is sad to

lose one's life just to be free, but it simply was necessary.

The church Jesus built (**Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28**) began in similar fashion. Men were committed to the freedom from sin provided by the blood of Christ. They preached the gospel of salvation in the name of Christ in the face of great persecution. They did so because they knew the value of that freedom from sin and the power of Satan (**Ephesians 2:1-5**). In the face of that persecution they proudly proclaimed their allegiance to the Christ Who had died for them and had raised from the grave and refused to cease preaching and teaching in His name (**Acts 4:19; 5:29**).

The inspired apostle John tells us we must reject the influence of the world, *"Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."* (1 John 2:15-17)

The question before us is are we lighting the way for the world or are they dimming our vision and inhibiting our ability to walk in the footsteps of Jesus?

**Jim Stauffer**

When everything seems to go wrong...just P.U.S.H!  
When the job gets you down...just P.U.S.H!  
When people don't react the way you think they should...just P.U.S.H!  
When your money looks "gone" and the bills are due...just P.U.S.H!  
When people just don't understand you...just P.U.S.H!

P = Pray  
U = Until  
S = Something  
H = Happens

**Whit Sasser**

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**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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- Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship
- Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship
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## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10