

“NOTHING”
Gen.1:1; Heb.11:3
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Preachers are constantly faced with the problem of deciding on **SOMETHING** to preach.
 - a. This problem is not because material is lacking. The Bible is full of it.
 - b. The problem is deciding:
 - (1) What to preach; what to select from all the material available; when to preach what.
 - (2) How to arrange and present the material so as to do the most good and do the best job possible presenting it.
 - c. The apostles of Jesus Christ did not have this problem for they were inspired by the Holy Spirit and given their message when and where needed, Mt.10:18-20; Jno.16:7,12,13; Eph.3:1-5.
 - d. But preachers today are not apostles, neither are they inspired. Thus they must study the material available in the written word furnished by the Father to Jesus Christ to the apostles who wrote it down for us to read and understand, and then decide what to select from that material to preach on any specific occasion such as this.
2. In deciding on **SOMETHING** to preach at this time, I have decided to preach on **“NOTHING.”**

II. DISCUSSION

A. OUT OF **NOTHING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, Gen.1:1; Heb.11:3.**

1. The word “created” (Hebrew “bara” – baw-raw’) does not of itself and absolutely preclude the use of existing material.
 - a. Cf. Isa.65:18b: “Behold I **create** (bara) Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.”
 - b. Also see Gen.1:27 and 5:2: “Male and female **created** (bara) he them.”

- c. However, when no existing material is mentioned as to be worked with or over, as at the “beginning”, no such material is implied.
 - (1) Consequently Gen.1:1 teaches creation *ex nihilo*, “creation out of nothing,” a doctrine otherwise also clearly taught by the Scriptures, Gen.1:26a,27a; Heb.12:9b; Rom.4:17; Heb.11:3; Psa.33:6,9; Amos 4:13.
- 2. This is the only reasonable, scriptural way to account for creation; for the existence of the heavens and the earth.
 - a. We have to begin with a self-existent Being who created something out of nothing; for something cannot come from nothing.
- 3. The evolutionist has to start with something; thus he has a problem!
 - a. Ask him what that something is or was and where that something came from and he cannot answer; he assumes this or that with no reasonable idea as to the truth of it.
- 4. Man can arrange and re-arrange, design and redesign, make or fashion from existing materials, but he cannot create from nothing! Only God can do that! Only God did that!

B. MAN BROUGHT NOTHING INTO THIS WORLD AND WILL CARRY NOTHING OUT, 1Tim.6:7.

- 1. That is why V.6 says, “...godliness with contentment is great gain,” and is why Vv.8-10 follow with their exhortation and warning.
- 2. Since man carries nothing out of this world, then the true purpose of his stay and ultimate purpose of his service during his stay here is not a quest for the material.
 - a. The primary purpose of his stay here is:
 - (1) Spiritual, not material, Eccl.12:13; 1Tim.6:17-19; Mt.6:33.
 - (2) To prepare for another life, Amos 4:12; Mt.6:19-21; 1Pet.1:3-5,9.
 - (3) For God’s pleasure, Rev.4:11.
- 3. If one loses sight of this, he will come up with nothing worthwhile when he dies; for the material cannot be taken with him; and he will have lost his soul; both body and soul will be cast into hell, Mt.10:28.

C. THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLDLY WISE WILL BE BROUGHT TO NOTHING, 1Cor.1:19.

1. Take note of 1Cor.1:17-29.
2. Man's wisdom minus God equals **NOTHING** in spiritual matters, in the saving of the soul!
 - a. To be worth anything in such matters, man's wisdom must by faith depend on and be developed and guided by God's, 1Cor.1:18; Heb.4:1,2; Jno.6:44,45.
3. We need to learn this lesson in the church today.
 - a. As important as secular training it, we must not emphasize secular training to the neglect of spiritual training. To do so is to sacrifice souls!
 - (1) Yet, some parents make their children attend secular school, as they should, but let them miss Bible Study if they don't want to go.
 - (2) They make sure about their grades in school, but do nothing about preparing their lessons for Bible Study; or if they do something, the way in which they do it nullifies its effects.
 - (3) If have known parents to say, when approached about their children who never prepare their lessons for Bible Study, "Don't talk to me about that! I do well to even get them here!"
 - (4) Consider the following Scriptures: Eph.6:4; Heb.5:12-14; Deut.6:3-9; Cf. Rom.15:4; 1Cor.10:11.
 - b. It also is not unheard of that sometimes a preacher may have two or three colleges degrees, yet not know enough about the Bible to defend it.
 - (1) Many of them know various ways of perverting the doctrine of Christ.

D. JESUS SAID, "FOR WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING," Jno.15:5.

1. This was true of, said to and applied primarily to the Apostles of Jesus Christ in fulfilling their divine mission as apostles, Vv.1-16. Cf. Mt.28:18-20; Mk.16:19,20; Heb.2:3,4.
2. In the broad sense, it is also true of us in our hope of salvation, for Jesus Christ is our:
 - a. Source of life, Jno.14:6; 6:53; Gal.2:20; Col.3:4.
 - b. Savior, Mt.1:21; Lk.19:10; Heb.5:8,9.
 - c. Way to the Father, Jno.14:6.
 - d. Hope, 1Tim.1:1; Col.1:27; Cf. Eph.2:12.

- e. Pattern or example to follow, 1Cor.11:1; 1Pet.2:21.
- 3. Morality minus Christ and the gospel of Christ equals **nothing** in the matter of the salvation of the soul of man, Jno.8:24; 1:1-13; Rom.1:16,17; Jno.15:4; Ac.10:1-6; 11:13,14; Isa.64:6.
- 4. Jesus Christ is the “builder”, “the head,” and the “savior” of his church for which he “gave himself”, to which he adds the saved, and in which both Jew and Gentile, who are saved, are “reconciled” to God, Mt.16:18; Eph.1:22,23; 5:22-27; 2:16; Ac.2:47
- 5. Conclusion: Anyone who is **separated from** or **without Christ**, who is **out of the body, which is the church belonging to Christ**, is and has **nothing** as far as salvation or hope of salvation is concerned. Cf. Ac.4:10-12.

E. “IF THE SALT HAVE LOST HIS SAVOR...IT IS THENCEFORTH GOOD FOR NOTHING,” Mt.5:13.

- 1. Salt seasons, saves and preserves!
- 2. If a child of God, a disciple of Christ, loses the qualities which make him “the salt of the earth”, he is **good for nothing!**
 - a. He is good for nothing is service to God and Christ; in fact, he becomes a hindrance; he is a source of shame, and even a cause of blaspheme to the name of God among unbelievers. Cf. Rom.2:17-24.
 - b. Thus, it is possible for a professed Christian to become a “good-for-nothing” church member.
 - c. “Good-for-nothing” servants of the Lord.
- 3. This passage says it is possible for one once saved to fall from grace! Cf. Gal.5:1-4; 1Cor.9:27; Heb.12:14,15; 2Pet.2:20,21. Also, 1Cor.10:12

F. WITHOUT LOVE WE ARE NOTHING AND CAN PROFIT NOTHING. FOR RELIGIOUS ACTS MINUS LOVE EQUALS NOTHING, 1Cor.13:1-3.

- 1. Paul here shows:
 - a. That regardless of what we have been given, unless we are motivated by love in the use of it, we are **nothing**, we are **honorless**; that even the inspired tongue speaker without love was **nothing** – just a meaningless noise, Vv.1,2.
 - 2. That unless we are motivated by love in our actions, the greatest sacrifice, or the most extreme sacrifice we may make profits us **nothing**; we are profitless in our efforts! That even the miracle

- worker of that day without love profits nothing, V.2; that even generous benevolence without love profits nothing, V.3; that even martyrdom without love profits nothing, V.3.
3. The importance of genuine love, the love taught in the Bible, is emphasized over and over again and again. For instance:
 - a. The first and great commandment deals with love, Mt.22:34-38.
 - b. The second, or the one next to it deals with the same subject, Mt.22:39.
 - c. Then consider V.40.
 4. But to love merely in word and tongue means nothing; that one does not have “the love of God” dwelling in him; it must be in deed and in truth; or we might say, in act and in fact. See 1Jno.3:17,18; Cf. Mt.15:7,8.
 5. True love and God and love of the brethren are co-existent; one without the other does not exist; one without the other is nothing! See 1Jno.4:20-5:2.
 6. This kind of love would solve many problems in the church, even prevent their existence in the first place.
 - a. Note some of the Lord’s words:
 - (1) “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” – put them first, Mt.6:33. If we have genuine love of God, we will do that! Think of the problems that would solve as to the work and worship of the church.
 - (2) His prohibition against unjust judging, Mt.7:1-5.
 - (3) “It is more blessed to give than to receive,” Ac.20:35.
 - (4) “Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause...,” Mt.5:22.
 - (5) His standard of greatness, Mt.20:25-28.
 - (6) His statements about giving offence, Mt.18:6,7. Cf. Prov.18:19.
 - (7) About forgiveness, Mt.6:12,14,15; Lk.17:3-7. Road to forgiveness is a two-way street.
 - (8) His prayer for unity of believers, Jno.17:20,21; Cf. 1Cor.1:10-13.
 - b. How wonderful if all would heed these words of Christ!
 7. Nothing shall offend those who love the law of God, Psa.119:165. Cf. Jno.16:1.

G. “NOTHING” OF GOD’S WILL FOR MAN HAS BEEN KEPT BACK FROM US, Ac.20:20,26,27; 1Jno.1:1-3.

1. All truth was promised to be revealed to and through the Apostles of Jesus Christ, Jno.14:25,26; 16:7,12,13.
2. All that truth was revealed to the apostles as promised; for the Lord is not slack concerning any promise he ever made. And Jesus was faithful to the Father to carry out his mission; he did not sin. Cf. 2Pet.3:9; Heb.10:23; 1Cor.1:9; 1Th.5:24; 2Th.3:3; Rev.19:11.
3. The apostles by inspiration of the Holy Spirit claimed to have “kept back nothing” (Ac.20:20,26,27); to have “declared” what they had “seen and heard” (1Jno.1:1-3); to have written down what they had received “by revelation” (Eph.3:1-3); and that when we “read” we “may understand” and have the knowledge of the apostles (Eph.3:4,5). Cf. Eph.5:17.
4. Therefore, we have access to all truth which we can read and understand, and by which we can be made free from sin. See Jno.8:32.
5. This written revelation is complete and all-sufficient, 2Tim.3:16,17.
6. There is no spiritual vacuum waiting to be filled by latter day revelation; there is no future revelation for which we need wait – nothing whatsoever lacking yet to be revealed; we are complete in Christ, Col.2:10. Cf. Gal.1:6-12.

H. EVEN CHRIST PROFITS US NOTHING IF WE SEEK TO TEACH OR BIND ANY PART OF THE LAW OF MOSES IN THIS DISPENSATION, Gal.5:1-4.

1. Unless we “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free...Christ shall profit you (us) nothing,” Vv.1,2.
2. Seeking justification by any part of the law of Moses makes Christ of no effect, and the one seeking to do so is fallen from grace, Vv.3,4.
3. See Rom.1:16,17: “from faith to faith”, or “by faith unto faith”, or “by faith in order to faith,” is the idea. Cf. Gal.2:16 for inspired explanation.

I. “JOHN ANSWERED AND SAID, A MAN CAN RECEIVE NOTHING, EXCEPT IT BE GIVEN HIM FROM HEAVEN,” Jno.3:27.

1. Consider the context, Vv.25-36.

2. John in his reply to his disciples statements in Vv.25,26 points out his relationship to Jesus Christ (Vv.27-30), and then in Vv.31-36 the true position of Christ as “above all” (V.31).
3. In V.27, John utters the statement of a general principle –“a man can receive ***nothing***, except I be given him from above” – a principle which applies ***both*** to himself and to Jesus Christ in His mediatorial capacity.
4. He then proceeds in Vv.28-30 to apply this principle first to his own relationship to Jesus Christ, showing that it is one of subordination.
 - a. As it applied to himself, John ascribes his position and qualifications to the divine sovereignty.
 - b. It was of God that he had been qualified for his work, and had been successful in it.
 - c. Three things were prominent:
 - (1) That “I am not the Christ”
 - (2) “But that I am sent before him.” That he was the forerunner – the messenger of Christ – fore-announcing One more glorious than himself.
 - (3) That done, and Christ having come, his office or mission ceased, was fulfilled. “He must increase, but I must decrease.”
 - d. Christ’s and John’s relationship further identified, V.29.
 - (1) Christ is the bridegroom – the one who has the bride.
 - (2) John is the friend of the bridegroom.
5. What each had received and the mission each was chosen to perform in God’s scheme of human redemption was given him from above – “from heaven.”
 - a. Each came to do his Father’s will not his own.
 - b. John, Mk.1:1-4. Cf. Jno.3:28,30.
 - c. Jesus Christ, Lk.22:39-42; Jno.4:34; 6:38; Heb.10:7-9; Jno.9:4; 5:36; 7:17; Jno.12:48-50; 14:24.
6. In a broader application, what John says in Jno.3:27 is true concerning all of us in the matter of temporal things, even much more of spiritual things and the happy, blessed use of both.
 - a. In temporal things, Gen.8:20-22; 9:8-17; Mt.5:45; Ac.14:17; 1Tim.4:3-5; 6:17; Jas.1:17.
 - b. In spiritual things there is nothing given to man except from heaven through Jesus Christ.
 - (1) There is no spiritual blessing except in Christ Jesus, Eph.1:3.

- (2) Spiritual life is given to man through the One who has come down from heaven, Jno.6:33.
- (3) Man's power to become sons of God is given conditionally through faith in Jesus Christ, Jno.1:11-13.
- (4) The grace of God is given to us by Jesus Christ, 1Cor.1:4; Jas.4:6.
- (5) Man's salvation is a conditional gift of the grace of God by Jesus Christ, Eph.2:4,5,8-10.
- (6) God gives us the victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ, 1Cor.15:57,58.

J. EVEN JESUS, AS GOD IN THE FLESH, AS A MAN, COULD “DO NOTHING” OF HIMSELF.

1. Based on our study of the principle stated by John in Jno.3:27, and as affirmed elsewhere by Jesus himself, even Jesus Christ could “do nothing” of himself, nor did he do anything of himself.
 - a. He was dependent on and subordinate to the Father, Jno.5:19,30; 8:28.
2. The power by which Jesus functioned while on earth as the Messiah, as God in the flesh, was not by his own innate, natural power belonging to the fact that he was deity.
 - a. It was by the power and authority given to him by the Father through the Holy Spirit.
3. Scriptural proof of this and explaining what he meant by saying, “The Son can do nothing of himself” (Jno.5:19); “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (Jno.5:30); “I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things” (Jno.8:28). Cf. Deut.18:18,19; Ac.3:19-26 (emp.Vv.22,23).
 - a. Jesus, according to prophecy, and by his own admission, worked his miracles by means of the Holy Spirit while God in the flesh, Mt.12:27,28; Lk.11:19,20; Lk.4:18; Isa.11:1,2; 61:1,2; Cf. Ac.2:22; 10:38; Ac.1:1,2.
 - b. Jesus had all authority for his actions delegated to him by the Father, Mt.28:18; Jno.10:17,18; 17:1,2; 1Cor.15:24-28.
4. All of this helps us understand the truth taught in Phil.2:5-8, where Paul teaches that Jesus during his earthly mission had “emptied himself” or

divested himself, of the powers and prerogatives (the right to exercise a power or privilege in priority) of deity.

- a. He didn't give up his deity. He was deity; is deity; will always be deity!
- b. He simply emptied himself of the powers and prerogatives of deity.
- c. God, the Father, in possession of all such powers and prerogatives of deity cannot be tempted with evil; cannot be tempted to sin, Jas.1:13.
- d. But Jesus, as a man, emptied of all such powers and prerogatives of deity, can be and was tempted to sin, Heb.4:15; 2:11-18.

III. CONCLUSION

1. It is hoped that this study under the title "**NOTHING**" will mean **SOMETHING** to our spiritual well-being.
2. Remember this closing thought: If we lose our souls, we have gained **NOTHING** in this life or in the life to come that is really worthwhile, Mt.16:24-26.
3. Remember also: To do **NOTHING** is to lose your soul! Cf. Mt.25:24-30.
4. If you do not believe and obey the gospel of Christ while you live in this life, you cannot be saved here or hereafter, Mk.16:15,16; 2Th.1:6-10.
5. There will be no second chance at the 2nd Coming of Christ and the final judgment of all men!