

The Berea Baptist Banner

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth" Ps. 60:4

Christ's Church Before Pentecost

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma



He was on earth, saying **"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom"** (John 3:29). The term "bride" is used consistently throughout the New Testament as a metaphor speaking

of Christ's Church, so it seems clear that John said that Christ had a Church prior to Pentecost!

Baptist elder S.E. Anderson in one of his books lists 21 things that Christ's (local) Church had before Pentecost. Here is Bro. Anderson's list.

1. Believers before Pentecost had the Gospel. (Matt. 4:23; Acts 19:4)
2. Believers before Pentecost were

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The Son of Man's Lightning Coming

By Philip C. Parks
of Flint, Texas

(Matthew 24:27-31)

BACKGROUND:

Many Scriptural references describe Christ's appearance as the brightness of lightning. Interestingly enough, some of these references may be found in the Old Testament. One such example is when Daniel was visited by a heavenly visitor, who was arguably the pre-incarnate Son of God: **"His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like a colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude"** (Dan. 10:6).

Obviously, the New Testament



contains numerous references to Christ's brightness. When the Lord Jesus Christ was transfigured before a select few of His disciples, Matthew provided his description: **"His (Jesus') face did**

shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Matt. 17:2). Of the same transfiguration, John Mark, who was not a numbered disciple, wrote in his gospel, **"His (Jesus') raiment (garment) became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller (a garment cleaner) on earth can white them"** (Mark 9:3). It is believed among many credible scholars

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The Worth of A Good Name

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



and has been slave to thousands. . .but he that filches from me my good name. . .Rob me of that which not enriches him. . .And makes me poor indeed."

NAME? OR GOOD NAME?

How can a good name be obtained? Is just securing a famous name sufficient? It is not difficult to obtain a name among men. Adolf Hitler, John Dillinger, Jessie James, Benedict Arnold, and Judas Iscariot all obtained a name, but what kind of name? Definitely not a good name. These men are remembered by name for the evil they did to mankind. On the other hand, Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul, C. H. Spurgeon, George Washington, and George Washington Carver are remembered by name for the good that they did.

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"Success"

C. D. Cole
(1885 - 1968)



"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8).

I believe this is the only time the word "success" is found in the Bible. A great Greek writer who lived 500 B.C. said that "success is man's god." And it is true that people have always laid great stress on success. Webster: "Success is the favorable or prosperous termination of anything attempted." If I attempt to get wealth and get it, I have been a success. I expect more people measure success by the dollar mark than by any other standard. If fame and prominence is my goal, and my name is heard over radio and read in the press---if all I do and say is followed by

the multitudes---then I am a success. But these ideas of success leave out a very important question: "Where and what shall I be in eternity?"

Books have been written on success and rules have been laid down for success. Just the other day an article appeared in one of the leading magazines claiming to give the grand rule for success. It told of a certain man who gives himself the one-year test, in trying to evaluate the importance of the various elements that make up his life. He merely asks himself how important the thing he wants today will be one year from now. Most of the things that seem so essential at the moment will, he decides, have been forgotten a year from now. Why bother with them at all? Why give them

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Before you put on your new clothes take off the old.

You must repent and leave off old sins before you can hope to exhibit the graces of the Christian life. Put off the old man and put on the new man.

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Colossians 3:9-10).

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1. To honor God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To preach the gospel to lost sinners.
3. To spread the whole counsel of God's Word.
4. To encourage God's preachers and to strengthen His churches in the most holy faith.
5. To motivate God's children to a closer fellowship around His Word.
6. To inform people of world events in light of Bible prophecy.
7. To condemn and expose error wherever it may rear its ugly head.
8. To stimulate Christian growth in grace.
9. To make the Devil and his demons as mad as possible.

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Christ's Church

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genuinely converted. (Luke 1:15-17; 19:1-10)

3. Believers before Pentecost were baptized after conversion. (Matt. 3:6-8)

4. Believers before Pentecost had Christ as their Head. (Matt. 23:8)

5. Believers before Pentecost were instructed in Church polity. (Matt. 18:15-20)

6. Believers before Pentecost were ordained. (John 15:16)

7. Believers before Pentecost were commissioned (Matt. 28:16-20)

8. Believers before Pentecost were organized enough for their needs. (John 13:29)

9. Believers before Pentecost had a missions program. (Matt. 10:1-11:1)

10. Believers before Pentecost had the essentials of church-life. (Evangelism, service and worship, and the presence of Christ among them) (Matt. 4:9; 18:20)

11. Believers before Pentecost had qualified pastors. (John 21:15-17)

12. Believers before Pentecost had the Lord's Supper. (Matt. 26:26-30)

13. Believers before Pentecost had the Holy Spirit. (John 20:22)

14. Believers before Pentecost had Divine power to do Christ's work. (Luke 9:1)

15. Believers before Pentecost sang "in the midst of the church." (compare Heb. 2:12; with Matt. 26:30)

16. Believers before Pentecost had prayer meetings. (Acts 1:14)

17. Believers before Pentecost had business meetings. (Acts 1:15-26)

18. Believers before Pentecost had a membership roll. (Matt. 10:2-4; Acts 1:13-15)

19. Believers before Pentecost were united into a church in such a way that they could be "added unto." (Acts 2:1 & 41)

20. Believers before Pentecost had Christ as their Foundation and Corner Stone (Matt. 16:18; I Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20)

21. Believers before Pentecost had Christ for a time as their pastor ("poimen"). Eph. 4:11 & John 10:14.

Now we raise this question: What did the church have after Pentecost that she did not have before Pentecost? She lacked one thing prior to Pentecost: The public testimony of God's power. This was shown to all observers when Christ, the Divine Administrator, immersed His waiting Church into the Holy Spirit with demonstrable power as seen on that day of Pentecost. Prior to Pentecost she existed and lacked nothing that she

gained on Pentecost other than that public testimony of Divine favor. So it was with the temple built by Solomon. It was complete and existed prior to the time the visible glory of the Lord filled the house. It was a real temple fitted for the worship and service of God, lacking only the visible Presence of God. (See I Kings chapter 8). And the Lord's Church, prior to Pentecost, was a real, functioning Church, lacking only the manifestation of the glory and power of God which came on that Day of Pentecost.

IF a church of any kind was born, or built, or formed on Pentecost, why is the Bible silent on this matter? There is not a verse in the Bible that says that any kind of church came into being on Pentecost. And IF a church was established on Pentecost, she had to reach back into an old dispensation to get baptism, the Lord's Supper and to get authority to make converts, baptize them, and teach them to observe what Christ commanded. Why do I say this? Because baptism, the supper, and the great commission were all entrusted to a body that existed prior to the church, IF the church began on Pentecost. What body was this? So then, any church established after the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ has no ordinances, and no commission or authority to act. And this is true for all churches which came into existence after Christ built His Church. What holes men dig for themselves when they leave off believing and following the Bible!



The Son of Man's

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that Apostle Peter supplied Mark with much of Mark's material found in his Gospel. If this be true, Mark's description of Christ's brightness is to be believed because Peter was an eyewitness of Christ's transfiguration.

Apostle John gave us the most detailed description of the brightness of our resurrected, ascended, and glorified Lord as He would appear today, if He were to reveal Himself. One such verse is worthy of quoting here: "His (Jesus Christ's) eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters" (Rev. 1:14-15).

One day, our Lord Jesus Christ will reveal Himself to the world in all His brightness during the event of His Second Coming.

Read **Matthew 24:23-31 (esp. v. 27)**.

INTRODUCTION:

In our modern, technologically savvy, scientific society, lightning has not gone unnoticed. Every aspect of lightning has been studied and documented. Scientists have determined the speed and temperature of lightning, how and why thunder is caused by lightning,

where lightning occurs, the detailed conditions that causes lightning to occur, and how often lightning occurs globally. Additionally, one can even find out how many people are struck by lightning per year. One does not have to be a scientist to learn and appreciate the facts concerning lightning.

Lightning is often described as an act of God. Because lightning is so unpredictable and cannot be controlled by the greatest achievements of human technology, it is often feared by the general populace, especially those governed by superstition. All of us should have a healthy respect for the dangers associated with lightning strikes. Most of us probably know someone who cringes and hides during a storm involving lightning and thunder.

Even the casually curious may study the phenomenon of lightning by consulting many sources. But the greatest source for studying lightning is the most ignored. That source is the inspired Word of God.

TRANSITION: Gaining secular and/or scientific knowledge of lightning may whet the appetite of the curious, but it is the spiritual wisdom gained from learning about lightning from God's Word that will prove to be far more beneficial. The LORD God, Who is the creator of lightning, has a great deal to say about it in His Word. God has used lightning in the past and He will use lightning in the future. Significantly, lightning is prominent in the description of Christ's Second Coming.

I. THE OLD TESTAMENT DESCRIBES HOW GOD USED LIGHTNING TO DESTROY HIS ENEMIES.

One such reference is described in Second Samuel 22:15, when David praised the LORD for using lightning to deliver him from all his enemies: "He (the LORD) sent out arrows, and scattered them (David's enemies); lightning, and discomfited (confused; scattered; destroyed) them." The reference to arrows is figurative language for lightning as revealed in the latter part of the verse.

The lightning arrows describe God's implements of death as pointed out in Psalm 144:6 when David requested God to bring about the demise of vain men: "Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them." See Numbers 24:8; Deuteronomy 32:42; Psalm 7:13 and 64:7 for other examples of God using lightning, figuratively described as His arrows.

Jesus Christ is on record comparing His Second Coming to the characteristics of lightning: "as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:27). Christ will somehow use lightning extensively to overwhelm and destroy His enemies

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when He returns.

II. CHRIST'S LIGHTNING COMING WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY THUNDER.

In our natural world, lightning is followed by thunder. This phenomenon is Scripturally noted by Job: "(God) **made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder**" (Job 28:26).

In Scripture, thunder is used more than just a natural phenomenon during inclement weather. Thunder is used to describe the voice of God. God stated this Himself in His retort to Job: "**Hast thou an arm like god? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?**" (Job 40:9). Examples of God's thundering voice may be easily found using a concordance. Consider Elihu's statement in Job 37:5, or Asaph's description in Psalm 77:18, or the Psalmist's warning in Psalm 104:7.

Thunder is also associated with the very presence of Jehovah God when His presence is witnessed by men. One such proof verse is Exodus 19:16, 20: "**And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. . . . And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount.**"

While not specifically stated in the context of Matthew's twenty-fourth chapter, the occurrence of thunder is implied to occur during Christ's apocalyptic Second Coming. One such Scriptural reference is found in Hannah's prayer of rejoicing regarding the promised Messiah's coming (I Sam. 2:10): "**The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king (the coming Messiah), and exalt the horn (power) of his anointed (Lord Jesus Christ).**" The descriptive language can only describe a cataclysmic event such as the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the New Testament, Apostle Peter alludes to a great noise occurring during the Day of the Lord, a time frame which certainly will include Christ's apocalyptic Second Coming: "**But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up**" (II Pet. 3:10). Would it be a stretch to interpret this great noise as thunder?

III. AS LIGHTNING IS HIGHLY VISIBLE, LIKEWISE WILL CHRIST'S COMING BE

WITNESSED GLOBALLY.

This may not be specifically stated in our text but who will be able to ignore the celestial events described in Matthew 24:29: "**the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.**"

It is fascinating how scientists, novice astronomers, and multitudes of those who are simply curious from around the globe gather together in one place during the event of a simple eclipse of the sun or moon. Descriptions of these occurrences are heralded in our media beforehand, during and after, with much fanfare.

Christ's coming will not be taken lightly as affirmed by our Lord Jesus (v. 30): "**then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**"

Lightning occurs globally as stated by Elihu in Job 37:3: "**He (God) directeth [the noise of his voice (v. 2)] under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends (the extreme boundaries) of the earth.**" In man's limited, perspective, lightning flashes brighten the entire sky as our Lord reminded us (v. 27): "**the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west.**"

Our Lord more than insinuates that when He comes again not one of the earth's populace will be able to ignore the spectacle. Jesus said His coming again will be highly visible as the lightning is visible (Luke 17:24): "**as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.**" As lightning cannot be ignored, neither will Christ's brightness be ignored when He comes again. Apostle John declared this fact (Rev. 1:7): "**Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him.**"

IV. AS LIGHTNING OCCURS RAPIDLY AND WITHOUT WARNING, SO TOO WILL CHRIST RETURN WITH LIGHTNING SPEED.

Divine judgments upon the world's rebellious are often recorded to come with lightning speed. The flood consumed man in his wickedness with great suddenness. Jesus reminded His audience of this fact in Matthew 24:39: "[They] **knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.**" The Lord destroyed Sodom suddenly (Luke 17:29): "**the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.**" The Red Sea consumed Pharaoh's armies without warning. Review Exodus 14:27-28. Twice, fire came down from heaven and consumed the captain and his fifty soldiers that had come to persecute the



Lord's prophet as recorded in Second Kings, chapter one. Many other examples of lightning speed judgments may be reviewed when researching God's Word.

In His mercy, Jehovah God has given the world ample warning that He will judge quickly. God's Word repeatedly warns the world's rebellious and Christians alike that His apocalyptic coming again with judgment is "**near**" (Ezek. 30:3) or "**at hand**" (Joel 1:15; Zeph. 1:7). Zephaniah greatly emphasized the fastness of the approaching day of the Lord: "**The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth (is swiftly coming) greatly (excessively), even the voice (thunderous announcement) of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly**" (Zeph. 1:14).

CLOSE: In The New Testament, our Lord Jesus Christ is no less subtle in His warning us that when He comes again with judgment, He will do so with lightning speed. Six times our Lord Jesus Christ said, "**I come quickly**" (Rev. 2:5, 16; 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20).



Worth of A Good

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We must not seek to obtain a name like the builders of Babel, who for the pride of life would make themselves a great name (Gen. 11:4). They wanted to be remembered for building a tower to Heaven; they wanted to make a name in

history for other men to marvel at and wonder. But God buried the names of those Babel-builders in the dust of the plains of Shinar and not so much as one name can be found in history.

Absalom, the rebellious son of King David, erected a stone in the valley of Kidron to keep his name in remembrance (II Sam. 18:18). This was an attempt to glorify himself in the eyes of his fellows. This pillar turned out to bear his name and the memory of his infamous life. What he designed for the glory of his name proved in the hand of Providence to be his everlasting dishonor and shame. This is not the kind of name we are commanded to have in our text.

HOW TO OBTAIN IT

A good name is to be obtained by consistency in our Christian life. Demetrius had a "**good report of all men**" because he lived godly in Christ Jesus (III John 12). Cornelius, the centurion of Caesarea, was "**a just man, and one that feareth God, and of a good report among all the nations of the Jews**" (Acts 10:22). Of Ananias of Damascus it is written: "**And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having good report of all the Jews which dwelt there**" (Acts 22:12). These humble souls may have been unconscious of their reputation, or felt it was not deserved. But the fact remains that they had a good name among all men.

A good name is based on permanent excellency of character and immutable

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virtue. It is not dependent on the variable and shifting winds of popular opinion. It consists of a new nature formed by the Holy Spirit in regeneration and maintained by the influence of the Word of God. It is awarded us by the good and godly among men. It is also due to the fruit of the Spirit and our own personal exertion before men.

One of the most precious things this side of Heaven is a good name: **"A good name is better than precious ointment"** (Eccl. 7:1). A saved man will be more anxious to deserve a good reputation than to possess it. He desires to have such a name in deed and in truth. The possession of this good name adds to his usefulness and gives authority to his reproof and counsel. Without an honorable name no church member can qualify as a church officer. To be an efficient missionary, pastor, evangelist, deacon, or church official you must be blameless, having a good report of them which are without (I Tim. 3:2, 7; Acts 6:3; II Cor. 8:16-18).

HOW TO LOSE IT

A good name is won by virtue, by industry, by skill, by patience, by godly living, and by perseverance. But it can be lost by carelessness, by ignorance, by crime, and by avarice. Job 18:17 says that the wicked **"shall have no name in the street."**

Much depends on how a young man begins his life. He may choose whether he will be remembered to his praise or to his shame. The early principles adopted and the habits formed tend to become fixed and permanent. The critical period is from 14 to 21 years of age. If a young man passes this period with pure morals and a fair reputation, a good name is almost sure to crown the years ahead. But if a young man gives in to harmful drugs, sexual impurity, profanity, and other sinful acts, he inflicts an injury on his good name which time cannot erase and which bitter tears cannot wash away.

It takes many years to build up a good name on earth, but it can be lost in a thoughtless moment. What it took years to gain by numerous good deeds can be destroyed by one fit of anger. Moses ruined his good name to some degree by disobedience to God. David

blackened his character in a horrible manner. He carried a blot on his name which followed him to the grave. Noah injured his standing as a just man by drinking too much wine in the presence of his sons. Simon Peter hurt his standing among the early Christians by his denial of Christ and cursing. Samson defiled his character with Deliah until it brought about his death.

HOW DREADFUL THE LOSS

While a good name is won by much spiritual activities and great self-denial it is often forfeited by a moment of moral madness. It is far easier to lose a good name than to regain it. Without a good name the earth offers little comfort and pleasure. Without it stocks and bonds have no value, a noble birth no distinction, an exalted station no dignity, superior beauty no charms, and old age no reverence. Without it treasure impoverishes, every grace deforms, every dignity degrades, and all the accomplishments of life end in failure. He who loses his good name is under eternal quarantine. He has no friend to greet him and no home to harbor him.

A spotless character is a sure protection against suspicion and evil reports. A person with a bad reputation is suspected of a thousand acts of which he may not be guilty. If he does a good deed it may be ascribed to a wrong motive, for he has lost the confidence of his fellow creatures. An evil name exposes a person to a thousand painful suspicions and blasting reports. It deprives of a peace of mind and cuts one off from usefulness to God and man.

By unrighteousness many a saint of God is deprived of his good name and ruins his religious profession. If Satan cannot hinder the servant of Christ, he will blacken his name before men. The Prophet Nathan charged King David with adultery and murder, adding **"because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme"** (II Sam. 12:14).

The idolaters and infidels of David's day rejoiced over his falling into sin and spoke ill of his God. They probably said: "Look at King David! See the unworthiness of the Hebrew religion! What does it matter if he can play well on his harp and sing psalms to Jehovah? Of what benefit is his religion which does not restrain him from the acts of adultery and murder?" Scandalous sins on the part of professing believers bring reproach upon true religion (Rom. 2:24) and are a great hindrance to the conversion of the unsaved.

Proverbs 10:7 says: **"The memory of the just is blessed; but the name of the wicked shall rot."** Oh, the superior worth of a good name on this side of the grave! The memory of it is a blessing to our family and a credit to Christ's church. How pleasant is the memory of "the good report of the elders" in Hebrews Chapter 11. The memory of a

godly mother or father is an unspeakable boon (Prov. 21:28). The same may be said of a righteous king (II Chron. 35:24-25), a faithful minister (Heb. 13:7), a public benefactor (II Chron. 24:6), or a self-denying believer (Mark 14:9). No inscription on a tombstone can preserve such a person's memory like the remembrance of his pious conduct which honored God and blessed man.

Some make such a bad name for themselves that their fellow creatures get a sigh of relief to learn they are dead and buried. Such worthless men's names rot above the ground while their bodies rot in the grave. Ecclesiastes 8:10 reads: **"And I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this is also vanity."** The psalmist said of the wicked: **"Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out"** (Ps. 109:13). The name of such people becomes a curse and a byword (Isa. 65:5; Jer. 22:18-19; 29:22-23).

SOME MAKE TOO LITTLE

Often many of us make too little of the importance of a good name. We may have in a careless moment said, "So long as my conscience is clear, I don't care what the world says about me." But while it is a small matter to be judged by man's judgment (I Cor. 4:3), it is a great matter to stop the mouths of gainsayers. It is our duty to see that our good is not evil spoken of. In Titus 2:8 it is written: **"Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."**

This same truth is again seen in great detail in I Peter 2:12-15: **"Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."**

It is our Christian duty to keep down unjust suspicions. Living in a censorious world, we must labor to avoid giving occasion to those who would speak reproachfully of us. It is a sin for others to reproach us without good cause, but it is our impudence which gives them just cause to cast out our name as evil. This impudence we must do our best to avoid. Our usefulness in personal witnessing is largely dependent on an irreproachable character. We are to **"give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully"** (I Tim. 5:14).

Let us never engage in things which

GENTLEMEN



The Good Wife

How much of this world's happiness and prosperity is contained in the compass of two short words! Her influence is immense. The power of a wife, for good or evil, is altogether irresistible. Home must be the seat of happiness, or it must be forever unknown. A good wife is to a man wisdom and courage, and strength and hope, and endurance. A bad one is confusion, weakness, discomfort and despair. No condition is hopeless, when the wife possesses firmness, decision, energy, and economy. There is no outward prosperity which can counterfeit indolence, folly and extravagance at home. No spirit can long resist bad domestic influence. Man is strong but his heart is not adamant. He delights in enterprise and action, but to sustain him he needs a tranquil mind and a whole heart. He expends his whole moral force in the conflicts of the world. His feelings are lacerated to the utmost point of endurance by perpetual collision, irritations and disappointment. To recover his equanimity and composure, home must be to him a place of repose, of peace, of cheerfulness, of comfort, and his soul revives its strength, and again goes forth with fresh vigor to encounter the labor and troubles of the world. But if at home he finds no rest, and there is met with bad temper, sullenness, or gloom, or is assailed by discontent, complaint and reproaches, the heart breaks, the spirits are crushed, hope vanishes. (*The Baptist*, May 8, 1874).

"Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD" (Pro. 18:22).

would cause the world to criticize us unless it be in matters of obedience to God. When the Jews did wrong in Nehemiah's day he rebuked them in this fashion: **"It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?"** (Neh. 5:9). Our conduct must be approved of both God and man whenever it is possible: **"Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also IN THE SIGHT OF MEN"** (II Cor. 8:21) (emph. MRC).

SOME MAKE TOO MUCH

We must never overvalue man's ◊ (Continued on page 65)

IT'S FINAL AND IT'S NOT COMING BACK

Look at your mailing label on the front page of this month's paper. If you see above your name "Expires 4/2012" then this will be your last issue. So don't miss an issue! Renew now so you won't miss next month's *Banner*.

Worth of A Good

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estimation of our name. The desire to please Christ must come first. We are not to sacrifice principle or compromise God's Word to secure man's approval. This was the error of the false prophets in the Old Testament times who flattered Israel in their sins. It is the present fault of irreligious politicians (Acts 12:1-3) and liberal clergymen. Jesus said of these good-lord-and-good-devil characters: **"Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets"** (Luke 6:26).

A good name must never be purchased at the expense of conscience. It would be better if our name was blotted out among men than we wound our conscience and disgrace our God. Personal credit is vital, but conscience must have first place. To be approved of men and despised by God is a pitiful condition to be in on earth. We are not to render eye-service as men-pleasers (Col. 3:22).

ITS ETERNAL WORTH

A good name is worth more than all the riches in the world. Envious men may attempt to tarnish it as they did the name of Christ, but honest and godly men will acquit us without a trial, knowing our sterling Christian character. It is the richest possession we can have while living, and the best legacy we can leave behind us when we are dead. It will survive when we are no more. It will endure when our bodies have returned to the dust.

Multitudes of faithful Christians have left a good name in the annals of the church. One such example is found in Matthew 26:6-13: **"Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."** This woman obtained a good name and performed a good act which was recorded in the book of God's remembrance (Mal. 3:16).

Those who have a good name on earth can rejoice that God in eternity passed wrote their names in the book of life. Jesus

told His disciples: **"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven"** (Luke 10:20). To be enrolled among those who inherit eternal life is an unspeakable joy, but it can be known for certain only by godly living on earth (Phil. 4:3).

How glorious the promise of Christ to His elect people: **"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels"** (Rev. 3:5).

The elect can never become non-elect. What God has written in the book of life He will not blot out due to the unchangeableness of His nature. The names of all the elect will be found there on the great judgment day. Since no one has access to the book but its Keeper, there is the most positive assurance that the names of all the elect are eternally secure. This is further confirmed by Christ's covenant promise: **"I will confess his name before my Father."** Unless Christ fails in His part of the everlasting covenant, the names of all in the book of life are written there forever!

CONCLUSION

Dear Christian friend, how much concern have you shown in past days for a good name? Are you as concerned as you ought to be about what others think of you? Have you forgotten you are your brother's keeper? Have you been guilty of bearing false witness against another which injured his good name? May the Lord help His believing children to strive to maintain a good name and to value the good name of others. This is a part of our duty to God, a duty often ignored to our sorrow and the grief of our fellowman.

Am I addressing someone who has lost his good name? Maybe you sit in a jail cell on some criminal charge? Perhaps you are so embarrassed over your immoral conduct you dare not show your face in public. There is a God in Heaven that can help you restore your good name. He has the power to confer upon those who repent of past sins and believe on Him the name of a son of God. He can restore your dignity and honor in a large measure by making a great change in your heart. To know Him is worth more than to have a good name.



"Success"

(Continued from page 61) ◊

importance? Why not concentrate on those things which are most likely to underwrite my success?

This rule for success would be very good if human existence ended at death. But it forgets the eternity of man. The better test might be called the eternity test. What will the thing I want today be worth in eternity?

However, the man under consideration is wiser than most men; for most men live for the absolute present---what gratifies for the moment is all they consider. For success in this life, the one-year test is good.

The Scripture I read tells of the death of Moses before Israel had crossed the Jordan. The responsibility of leadership fell upon the shoulders of Joshua, the minister of Moses. Joshua is told to arise and lead the people across the river. This was a big order and a trial of faith, for Jordan was in flood---and how was that great crowd of men, women, and children to get across the river which was impassible and no ferryboats in sight, to say nothing of the watchful eyes that were upon them from the other bank? To cross a stream in the face of an enemy is a ticklish operation, even for modern armies. And not a hint is given as to the means of making the crossing. He is just commanded to do it, and God promises to be with him. It was a faith operation, for all the circumstances were against getting across. Faith is always tied by pitting visible circumstances against the invisible God and His Word.

Here is something to note: God's word of promise is made plain and emphatic. He promised to be with Joshua as He had been with Moses. He promised that no man would be able to stand against him. He repeated His promise to be with him. He tells him that the land of the enemy is His gift to them, and that He is to **"divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give to them."** And then follows the conditions and rules for success. **"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper withersoever thou**

goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: . . . for then thou shalt have good success" (verses 7 and 8). We can apply these rules to God's people of this or any other generation. These rules for success are just as plainly told in the New Testament as here in the Old.

I. Man must have a Saviour. So far as eternity is concerned, there is not a step towards success without Jesus Christ as Saviour. Man, as a sinner, faces the law of God, and must be redeemed from its awful curse. God's law is backed by His justice, power, and holiness, and the sinner has no chance of escape from its awful penalty apart from a Saviour. **"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them"** (Gal. 3:10). **"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"** (Gal. 3:13).

II. The saved man must be strong and courageous. The Christian life is not a play party; it is a warfare. It is not a picnic; it is a battle. The church is not a lounging room; it is a feeding and training station. The church must have cradles and bottles for babies, but babies should grow up, and get to where they can get out of the cradle and give up the bottle, and do some fighting. Imagine a 50 years old man lying in a cradle with a bottle in his mouth, or crying at the top of his voice for attention. He would be a ridiculous sight with his arms and legs hanging over the sides and end of the crib. And yet that is the picture of a lot of church members.

The babies of World War I were the soldiers of World War II because they grew up and were strong.

Joshua had a difficult and dangerous assignment and he must be brave and strong. But his strength and courage must be in the Lord. He had no strength of his own to drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in the Land of Promise. Without the Lord, bravery would be foolishness and strength would be weakness. The strong city of Jericho was taken because God was with Israel, while the weak city of Ai was too much for Israel without the Lord.

The teaching of the New Testament is to the same effect. Jesus said, **"Without me ye can do nothing."** Paul said: **"I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."** **"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might"** (Eph. 6:10); **"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus"** (II Tim. 2:1). The word for "strong" in these

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“Success”

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two passages means “to make strong inwardly.” It means moral strength or heart courage. It is the kind of strength we need for Christian warfare. Physical prowess counts for little or nothing. A man may be a giant physically and yet be as weak as a baby morally and spiritually. The church needs spiritual giants today.

III. The saved man must pay attention to God’s Word. This is a necessary rule for success. **“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.”** This book of the law referred to the Pentateuch generally, and perhaps to Deuteronomy especially. It contained instructions for successful warfare and it must be known. Joshua needed to know it, and more than that, he needed to meditate upon it--he needed the strength that its promises would give. By meditating upon it, he would get inward strength that would enable him to win battles too much for his outward strength. With the inward strength of faith God would be his outward strength for victory. Trust is strength because trust touches the Rock of Ages. Trust connects with God the source of power.

If God’s people would meditate upon the Word of God they would have more strength. Meditation is to the spiritual man what chewing is in the physical man. Chewing our food enables us to digest it and get strength from it. Meditation grinds up the food of God’s Word. It is not enough to know the letter of the Word; we must ponder it for strength and courage.

IV. The saved man must observe to do all that is written. **“Thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.”** Meditation is not that we may be able to quote Scripture to others, but that we may do what Scripture commands. To be a success we must not merely be hearers of the Word; we must be doers of the Word also.

Courage and obedience make the perfect soldier. And they must go together like Siamese twins. Courage without obedience would be useless and there could be no obedience without courage. Courage is inward strength for outward duty, but what is the use to have inward strength if nothing is done?

The man of God has responsibilities, and he must not turn his back upon duty. The word “duty” comes from the word “due.” It means that we owe something, and we ought to pay our debts. What are some of the duties of the saved man? Whatever God has commanded. For the Christian soldier, Christ’s commandments are his marching orders. And what are these marching orders? What are Christian duties?

The over-all duty is to be His witnesses. We are to make Him known to the world--we are to promote the preaching of His Gospel to the ends of the earth. In connection with this, we ourselves must wait upon the preaching of His Word. We won’t be much interested in helping preach His Word to others if we ourselves despise the preaching of it. This problem of church attendance will be solved when people get the spirit of obedience to God. If we are not victorious, it will not be for lack of Divine power but lack of the spirit of obedience on our part.

The Duke of Wellington was once asked what was to be done about a difficult mission. Wellington replied, “What are

your marching orders?” The commission was read again, and Wellington said: “There is nothing to ask questions about. Do what you are told to do. Don’t stop to consider the difficulties.”

Now, Joshua was a soldier like Wellington. God commanded him: “Go across the Jordan, keep this book in your hand; meditate on it day and night; just obey, obey, obey.” And from the day he received his orders until he died, he never swerved.

Oh, how much we all need the spirit of obedience to the Lord that characterized Joshua. And this will spell “success” when He returns to reward the faithful.



The Hope of the Thessalonians

By Matthew Stepp
of Wayne, West Virginia

The Book of Second Thessalonians was written by the Apostle Paul--most likely on his second missionary journey. If you’ll recall in the book of Acts, chapter seventeen, the apostle to the Gentiles spent three weeks in Thessalonica preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Then as so many times in this tireless apostle’s journeying for his Saviour, the Jews got a mob together to persecute him. After their assault on his host’s house, (taking said Jason a prisoner until he posted some bond money) the Thessalonian believers sent Paul and Silas on to Berea. From there, persecuting Jews from Thessalonica followed him and ousted him from Berea, as well, ending up in Athens for a short stay and then on to Achaia and Corinth for an extended stay of at least eighteen months.

Most probably both epistles to the Thessalonians were written during his 18 month stay in Corinth, making them two of the earliest writings of the New Testament. As you can tell from reading both letters, those rascally Jews and their “**lewd companions of the baser sort**” were not content to harass just the apostles, but the new church was subject to very great persecution as well. **“So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure”** (II Thess. 1:4).

I think that persecution caused this early church to reflect much on their great hope of a returning Saviour. Surely, as Baptists, we don’t win many physical battles here on this earth, but our joy can remain undiminished as we trust in the spiritual blessings and promises of our Savior! **“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised**



to them that love him” (James 1:12). In Romans 5:3-4, **“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope.”** Hope in what? Hope in HIS COMING! **“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”** (Phil. 4:13).

That hope of His coming creates the heartbeat of these two epistles. Every chapter is inundated with references to His return. **“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day”** (II Thess. 1:7-10).

Surely the coming of the Lord was their hope! The chapter I’d like to take for our text today, if the beloved reader will allow, is the second chapter of II Thessalonians and that’s exactly how the author begins- with HOPE! **“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him”** (II Thess. 2:1). The apostle Paul evidently believed in a pre-millennial, pre-tribulational Rapture, because he lived in expectation of the coming of Christ and was looking forward to a reunion with the church in Macedonia and **“our gathering together unto him!”** What a marvelous verse to start off the chapter with! Take hope-

He’s coming for you and me and we’ll be gathered together to be with Him forever!

Now perhaps the beloved reader would like to know where the author gets the word rapture. Because although the Rapture is found in Scripture, the English word ‘rapture’ is not found in the King James Version that is without doubt the Word of God. I’m the one that’s always saying, “Show it to me in Scripture! I don’t want any mortal books of man to direct my theology!”

Okay, that’s fair enough. Let’s go to God’s Word! The Apostle Paul uses the English word ‘rapture’ in the first epistle to the Thessalonians. It’s not so easy to see, since Paul of Tarsus didn’t speak English! However, it still means the same, doesn’t it? Let me show you and you can decide... (We report, you decide! <smile>) It’s the wondrous passage of hope in chapter four, starting in verse 13, **“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”**

This passage is where the apostle most clearly gives a literal description of the hope of the Rapture. He draws a picture so clear that none can deny that just as the angels in Acts 1:11 says, **“...Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”** So as we see Jesus Christ coming back, the Apostle Paul is careful to show that God has an order here, as well. (God ALWAYS does!) The dead in Christ shall first be resurrected and commence their ascension into the clouds, but not so far ahead that **“we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds.”**

The Greek word for “**caught up**” is “**harpazo**” which literally means “to seize, or take with force.” The word is thusly used elsewhere in the Bible. In Acts 23:10, **“And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to <harpazo -**

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take him by force> from among them, and to bring him into the castle." In Jude 1:23, **"And others save with fear, <harpazo - pulling> them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."** In Acts 8:39, **"And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord <harpazo - caught away> Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing."** (Greek insertions into the KJV text- TMS)

So, clearly, the teaching here is that Jesus Christ is going to "snatch up, or take by a powerful, irresistible force" His people that are still alive at the time of the resurrection of Saints at the Rapture. But where is the word rapture? Well, God's people haven't always spoken the Queen's English! The Bible, and the New Testament in particular here, was translated into the tongues of the people in almost every nation that it has gone into. A prominent language used by God's people was Latin, used in Italy and its capital, Rome. We modern folk think of Latin as a dead language, or a language of scholars, but that wasn't the case throughout church history. When godly Christians took up the task to put God's Word into the hands of the Roman people, they, word for word, translated the Greek word "harpazo" into the Latin word "raptura!" Raptura (or rapture, as it comes into English) means to snatch or to seize with force! So when the Latin people wanted to put a name on the coming of the Lord, they used a BIBLE WORD! They constantly referred to their hope of Christ's coming as the RAPTURA! It's in the Bible, they would say! And it is! If you want to be an English stickler, you can refer to it as the "catching away" or the "seizing," but most folk will know what you mean more, if you speak of the Rapture.

And that's what the apostle was referring to as **"our gathering together unto him..."** in the first verse. Now as we continue our reading in verse two, you'll see what I was talking about when I say they were already experiencing some difficulties amidst their persecution. (1) **"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, (2) That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand"** (II Thess. 2:2).

You know what this verse is saying? Already, less than 30 years after our Saviour died on Calvary, heresies were rampant. And not just heresy and troubling divisions, but 1) forgeries, 2) false interpretations and 3) bad translations! That's what the Apostle

Paul was referring to as things that were shaking the foundation of faith (which is the written Word of God!) in these Thessalonian saints! **"...neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us..."** People were changing the clear teaching of God's Word with: 1) their own interpretations ("by spirit"); 2) with their heretical doctrines ("by word") and even to the point of 3) forging letters purportedly coming from the inspired pen of the Apostle Paul ("nor by letter as from us")! Beloved reader, do you think we've got it bad today with an alphabet soup of so-called translations of God's Word? Already folks were changing God's Word in the first century after Christ! The New Apostle Paul Translation (or NAPT) was being foisted upon the Baptists there in Thessalonica!

How are you going to fight that? Just like the Apostle Paul did. Go back to the original! God has ALWAYS preserved His Word, and He will continue to do so. The apostle refers back to the teachings of the Old Testament and of Jesus Christ, Himself and His apostles. **"This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme"** (I Tim. 1:18-20). **"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron"** (I Tim. 4:1-2).

If the Apostle Paul, Timothy and the early churches had to be concerned about the pollution of God's Word, is it any wonder that we are surrounded today with a proliferation of versions? "Oh, Brother Matthew, it's no big deal! Just find one you're comfortable with!" Well, if such a philosophy is true, do I choose the one I'm most comfortable with - in the flesh? Or do I pick the most poetic? Best packaged? Most men-pleasing? Most popular according to the *Wayne County News*? Beloved reader, if it's GOD'S WORD, I ain't got no choice! Once I change one iota, it's not just God's Word anymore! It's mine and His Word! How awful is that?! Deliver me to Satan, if I ever do such a thing, that I may learn not to blaspheme!

Now on to the second verse. **"That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand"** (II Thess. 2:2). This is the clearest pre-trib verse I believe the Apostle Paul ever wrote. The Thessalonians were concerned that

they'd missed something and that the day of Christ was at hand. Evidently some were teaching that the day of Christ, including the Great Tribulation spoken of by Christ in the gospels, had already come upon them! The apostle refutes any such post-trib idea by letting them know God's order in this marvelous chapter! It's NOT the time of Jacob's trouble, folk! We're NOT going through the seven seals of Revelation 6! Let's continue on in our reading and see how systematically the apostle lays the future out for us!

This next passage picks up the general tenor of the chapter relating to the second coming of Christ. **"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God"** (II Thess. 2:3-4). It is interesting that we were sidetracked there for a couple of paragraphs teaching on the preserved Word of God. That's exactly what the Apostle Paul does here in verses three & four! Not side-tracked, exactly, but wanting to make sure we understand these important points! Once he mentions the man of sin, he continues on with some extra information about him and the abomination of desolation that is not necessarily pertinent to the matter at point, which is the timing of the rapture.

Now, as he warns against the deceit of men and their many means, he states a definite fact. **"...that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first..."** The Greek here reads "apostasia" which is our English word "apostasy" or a "defection from the truth." Many are the New Testament texts that reinforce this surety. But what I want to notice is the chronological order manifested by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul. What is **"that day"** that **"shall not come"** without first being presaged by this time of apostasy? Why, it's referring back to verse one and two, isn't it? The **"coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and ...our gathering together unto him..."** in **"...the DAY of Christ"** (TMS emphasis). Clearly the passage is teaching that the logical order for the end times is gonna be #1- A time of apostasy. #2- The coming of the Lord in the Rapture.

Now, please understand that a careful study of Scripture will show that verses three and four will cover a period of approximately three and a half years. When Daniel's seventieth week starts, it will be a time of great tribulation for seven years. This period will be broken up into two 3.5 year segments. The abomination of desolation, which is referred to here in verse four as the time that the son of perdition (the anti-Christ) sets himself up in the temple of God, taking God's glory unto himself,

STRENGTH



Lend the Paper!

A good instrument should not be lost, any more than a good opportunity. A religious newspaper, containing impressive paragraphs, admonitions, affecting narratives showing the power and excellence of religion, cautions against the snares of a wicked world, rousing exhibitions of the value of the soul, and hearty recommendation of the Saviour—is an instrument which should not be thrown away. Do not let such a paper be torn up, as soon as your family has read it. You have neighbors who never see a religious paper, and probably never will, if left to themselves. These paragraphs will be fresh and attractive to them, and will be read. Mark some of the most striking pieces with your pen, and hand the paper round among your neighbors. See that it goes, to a good number of families. This may cost you a little time and attention, but it is one of most ready ways of doing good. The children in your neighbor's family, the apprentices in his shop, the boarders in his house, may they read that which they never will forget; and the scrap which you throw away might save souls, if you would put it in circulation. There are secular papers enough which you can tear up and burn, without compunction. But when the press has sent out, in any form, a message of salvation, do not stop it. Send it forward. (*The Baptist*, May 1, 1847).

occurs at the midpoint of the seven year great tribulation. (We'll cover this later on, as will the Apostle Paul). So, verse four, as it continues to describe the anti-Christ and his actions in detail, are still chronological with verses 1-3. But, not necessarily with the whole chapter! Verse eight will once again mention the revelation of the anti-Christ, not for a return visit the second time, but to chronologically place it accurately in the whole chapter! This confusion has caused many to try to paint the future as a post-trib coming of the Lord. Not so! As a continued reading of this chapter will CLEARLY point out.

Perhaps this would be a good time to turn to Matthew 24 for the Lord Himself's sequential rendering of the last time events. **"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him**

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privately, saying, **Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world**" (Matt. 24:3). This is a good question and certainly the right person to ask! We won't take the time and space in this article to quote the whole chapter. I'll just show you the outline and you can take some time to read the chapter later. Basically verses four through twelve are signs of our present time, when the coming of Christ is imminent. Ten signs (or more) can be found in these nine verses (plus vs. 14 concerning the spread of the Gospel) that should point us to the fact that Jesus Christ is coming SOON! **"And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet"** (Matt. 24:6) (emp. TMS). Notice our Lord's admonition here, though! **"...the END is not yet!"**

Remember what the question of the twelve was back up in verse three? **"... what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"** None of these SIGNS are the End! False Christs will come and go, but WAIT UNTIL THE END! When will that be? Well, the Lord doesn't keep us on hold! Verses 13 and 14 pinpoint unto us the END! **"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."** When all the signs have been fulfilled (and I believe they have as of this present time -2011, as I type this) then, our precious Saviour tells the disciples **"...then shall the END come"** (emp. TMS). So, what's the END? His coming! The Rapture! That's what verse 13 is so clearly pointing out! **"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."** Just like the Apostle Paul points out- **"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"** (I Thess. 4:17). He that shall endure unto the END, shall be RAPTURED! Certainly the passage is not talking here of our eternal salvation based on the blood of Christ! Not a works salvation, when only grace will suffice. The END of this age will be the Rapture! The END of the work of the churches of Christ will be the Rapture! Just endure unto the END, and you (and every other saint of God) will be saved/raptured/snatched up!

Then, returning to the exposition of the 24th chapter of Matthew, verses 15 through 28 are a peek into the terrible time of Jacob's trouble, **"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."** These fourteen

verses will be a great hope as tribulation saints huddle in their hiding places during these terrible seven years! Yes, have faith! -these days have their number decreed of God **"And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened"** (Matt. 24:22).

The conclusion of the Great Tribulation is inscribed in the next chronological segment of the chapter, **"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other"** (Matt. 24:29-31). This is the second advent of our Lord, where He will touch down on the Mount of Olives and secure the victory in the Battle of Armageddon (Zech. 14:4/Rev. 19:11)!

How marvelous! And it's all written out for the world to see! But Satan himself will blind the world to believe a lie, as he's always done... The rest of Matthew 24 goes back and warns us to watch and pray. To be ready- not for the anti-Christ- but for what the Apostle Paul CONSTANTLY exhorts- the pre-tribulation Rapture of His saints by Jesus Christ! **"For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come"** (Matt. 24:38-42).

So, now, as we come back to the second epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, we find that this must have been a favorite topic of the Apostle Paul already, in his ministry. Verse five states: **"Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?"** The END times is not supposed to be a mystery! That's the whole purpose of the book of Revelation -to reveal! -to reveal! Every piece will fall into place in God's time! And the Apostle to the Gentiles is using this letter to the Thessalonians, and particularly this second chapter, to lay it simply and completely out!

The sixth verse returns us to the chronology of the chapter. **"And now ye know what withholdeth that he**

might be revealed in his time" (II Thess 2:6). Thus far we have 1) The time of apostasy or falling away. 2) The Rapture or gathering together. 3) The day of Christ, which will include the revealing of the anti-Christ and we know that down the line, he'll perform the abomination of desolation. Now in verse six, we find that SOMETHING is withholding the revelation of the anti-Christ. He is WITHHELD from his moment of power until the God decreed time- **"...in his time."** So what is doing the "withholding"? Good question! I think we're gonna need the next two verses to keep it in context. No reason to do any guessing when the Scripture clearly explains itself! **"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming"** (II Thess. 2:7-8).

Okay, clearly the wicked one is being withheld. Verse eight is clear enough in its beginning that we can understand that even though we learned some extra stuff about his future reign and doings, he still hasn't been revealed yet in the overall sequence of events in the chapter. **"And then shall that Wicked be revealed..."** **"And then..."** follows the events of verse 7! The **"mystery of iniquity"** is already working. Satan is already working in this present world. He is manipulating people on every hand. **"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience"** (Eph. 2:2) **"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out"** (John 12:31).

But what does it mean when verse seven starts **"only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed..."** 'Let' in this passage is an Old English word that means 'to prevent' or 'restrain'. In other words, someone is restraining and will continue to prevent until he be taken out of the way. Satan is certainly not doing the withholding of verse six, so it cannot be him either in verse seven that "now letteth". It can ONLY be God, specifically in relationship; it is God, the Holy Spirit. That makes perfect sense in the framework of the chapter! God restrained Satan from an uninhibited attack on Job and He does the same today in putting a hedge around His people.

I think we saw a bit of that on September 11, 2001 here in America. God has protected America for many years, but any time that He might pull back His hand we will see desolation. **"And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away**

the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste..." (Isa. 5:5-6). So what could cause God to COMPLETELY pull back His hand or COMPLETELY pull down His hedge? Let's go back to the first verse and I think we will get our answer! **"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him"** (II Thess 2:1). What will this world be like the moment after the Rapture occurs? Have you ever considered the preserving effect that the Salt of the Earth has on this world? Beloved reader, the day after the Rapture will be a day that has not a SINGLE saved person on the face of the Earth! Selah! Think about it!

In a very special way, God, the Holy Spirit takes up His abode on this earth IN HIS PEOPLE! **"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you"** (I Cor. 3:16)? **What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own"** (I Cor. 6:19). When God raptures up all of His saints the Holy Spirit (**who now letteth**) will depart with us! He also will be **"taken out of the way"**!

Now, I know that the Holy Spirit is just as omnipresent as the Father and the Son of God are, but in His work as the effectual Caller, the Regenerator of new life- it will be finished- for a time, at least. Beloved, if there are no Christians on the Earth, who will preach the Gospel? God has not changed the way He saves. By faith, through grace! Even in the book of Revelation and the Great Tribulation, the Gospel is the necessary precursor to salvation by faith. **"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people"** (Rev. 14:6). So, the Holy Spirit is the One who letteth and the moment He is taken out of the way can only be the Rapture. God will send the two witnesses of Revelation chapter eleven to preach the Gospel and the Holy Spirit will come back "with them" to regenerate with everlasting life the 144,000 Israeli preachers of Revelation 7 and 14.

So now we have the sequence of events and can continue with knowledge into the rest of the chapter. The Wicked will NOT be revealed until after the 1) Time of apostasy and 2) the rapture, which heralds 3) the Day of Christ. Again confirming the chronology of the first few verses, but what happens next? After the Wicked is revealed? Let's continue our reading, **"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness**

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of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (II Thess 2:8-9). Again, note that the verse is full of information and is again correct in its own sequence. I love reading the book of Daniel, because he rarely references the anti-Christ without mentioning, "Oh, by the way, God is going to destroy him!" (cf: Dan.8:14; 11:11, 24, 27, 29, 35, 36, 40, 45) And that is exactly what the Apostle Paul is doing here for the Thessalonians!

However, we must understand that God has allotted seven years for the anti-Christ, before his destruction and judgment will be meted out (at Armageddon). It will NOT be immediately after his revelation- it will be in his appointed time...! **"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week"** (Dan. 9:27). Daniel's seventieth week (a week of years) is seven years long and it will come in two 3.5 years periods according to Scripture, **"and the holy city shall tread under foot forty and two months"** (Rev. 11:2). **"And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half"** (Dan 12:7). A 'time' equals one year; 'times' equals two years; and 'an half' brings our total to three and a half years. This number is confirmed in Revelation 12:14, **"And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."** The forty-two months of Revelation 11 is the first half of the Great Tribulation, while the other two references of **"time, times, and an half"** refer to the last three and a half years and Jeremiah's time of Jacob's trouble, instigated by the breaking of the peace covenant mentioned by Daniel in his ninth and eleventh chapters.

Okay, the purpose of that aside concerning the seven years is for us to see that yet again, the verse remains in context with itself, but not necessarily with the whole chapter. Seven years don't go by and then verse 10 comes around. No, verse ten will follow the events chronicled by the whole chapter and follows immediately the Rapture of verse one, then the revelation of the wicked in verse eight.

So let's read our last three verses. **"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:**

That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (I Thess. 2:10-12). This verse passage peers through the window into the beginning of the Great Tribulation. The results of the apostasy in our day is that few are looking for our Saviour's return. Few are the sheep that hear His voice. Vast multitudes have been deceived into thinking their 'profession of faith' is real 'possession of eternal life.' Easy believism has swelled the ranks of Christianity without adding real converts to the churches of God.

Untold numbers will perish in this awful future, **"because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."** It is important to note the word 'received' in our text here. Salvation is by grace and it can't be bought or merited. Those who have 'received' the love of the truth are saved, eternally, true. But also in the context of the very near future, they will also be saved from this time of Great Tribulation! **"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth"** (Rev. 3:10). How appropriate and similar our Saviour's words back in Mark 13:13, **"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."** Saved (and raptured) because they loved the truth!

But those that received not the love of the truth? **"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."** They will 1) perish; 2) love not the truth; 3) not be saved; 4) believe the lie of the anti-Christ; 5) be damned. So many authors and theologians have written about the days and months after the Rapture as another 'Great Awakening.' Folks will see that all the Christians are gone and will by force of logic come to the conclusion that the Rapture was real and they missed it. Then, logically, they will repent and believe. Beloved reader, I don't know if any person that ever heard the blessed Gospel before the Rapture will EVER be saved after. There's just no promise of that in Scripture. TODAY is the day of salvation, particularly for the Gentiles. **"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in"** (Rom. 11:25). When the Gentile's time of fullness is come, as God restarts the clock for His beloved nation of Israel, I'm afraid our text verse will turn out to be only too true... all those left behind (Gentile & Jew) will believe a lie!

The total depravity of man changes not for the seasons or times. Only God can gift

with quickening faith and illuminating life! Signs and wonders will only harden the hearts of Pharaoh's children, as is evidenced time and again in Scripture... **"And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory"** (Rev. 16:8-9). Even those mortal men that witness the greatness, the holiness and the wondrous attributes of the King of kings throughout the Millennial Reign will not be converted by logic, nor natural inclination. Can you imagine living for 1000 years with Christ as King? And then as soon as God releases Satan from the bottomless pit, they show their true colors of blackness and corruption. **"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them"** (Rev. 20:7-9).

No amount of physical evidence will cause those left behind at the Rapture to believe the truth. "Aliens have transported our citizens to their ships in the upper atmosphere!" the television broadcasts may say. I don't know. Perhaps a super conspiracy. Maybe this, maybe that, whatever the lie, no matter how foolish it seems to us, they will swallow it hook,

line and sinker. Because, most of all, they DON'T WANT to believe the truth! Do they now, in our age and time? How many (seemingly reasonable) people still believe in evolution without a single scientific shred of evidence? They cling to their lies, because they hate the truth of God!

Oh, sinner, won't you consider your condition before an almighty God? I hope and pray that all of the beloved readers will have their hearts touched by the truth of God's Word. By the gospel of Jesus Christ! It is a life-changing viewpoint. That's what the Apostle Paul discovered on the road to Damascus, **"And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks"** (Acts 9:5).

Beloved reader, this same Jesus is coming soon. If God hadn't revealed Himself to Saul of Tarsus, he would have had no hope! My hope lies in the fact that He KNOWS me and He is surely coming for me. It would be the most awful thing in the world, if you didn't know Him and will be found in that day despising THE truth- holding the coats of those stoning Christ's servants today... May God give you the grace to believe! **"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ"** (II Thess. 2:13-14). May God bless these words to your heart.



- A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS -

By Timothy Hille
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Chapter Thirteen The Law of Discerning Leprosy

God gave the law of leprosy unto the children of Israel (1) as a benefit unto them in maintaining their health as a nation, and (2) as a type to instruct both them and us as to the nature and characteristics of sin. **"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope"** (Rom. 15:4). **"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come"** (I Cor. 10:11). Leprosy serves as a type of sin, showing the true nature of sin, starting within a person and working out, corrupting the



whole being and destroying the body, soul, and spirit.

Chapter Outline

- i. The priests to discern leprosy: vs. 1-3
- ii. Leprosy in its various forms:
 - (a) A bright spot and scab: vs. 4-8
 - (b) A rising or swelling: vs. 9-17
 - (c) A hot ulcer: vs. 18-23
 - (d) An inflammation: vs. 24-28
 - (e) A scall: vs. 29-37
 - (f) Of freckled spots and baldness: vs. 38-44
- iii. The leper - unclean and shut out of the camp: vs. 45,46
- iv. Leprosy in garments: vs. 47-59

I. VERSES ONE THROUGH THREE.

"And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron." We should note that these commands were given by God. Holiness and unholiness can only be determined by the Word of God. Many people today are opposed to the Bible's definition of sin; but only by God's Word can sin be properly identified, diagnosed,

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Recently I watched a televangelist who was stating that Adam and Eve had children before they were sent from the Garden of Eden. He continued that they were not sent from the garden till verse 23 and cited Genesis 3:20 "because she was the mother of all living." Eve is spoken of as the mother of "all" living. Doesn't this verse prove that there had to be at least two others (children) if Eve "was" the mother of all living since God created both her and Adam? - Kentucky

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"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen. 3:21). Those who sinned in the garden needed a blood sacrifice, wherefore there would be no need for a blood sacrifice for those who did not sin. Cain and Abel would have no reason to leave the Garden of Eden and thusly would not have to leave the garden. I am positive that we would have been informed that the children of Adam and Eve were still without sin and their parents were driven from the garden.


The fourth chapter explains to us that after the expulsion of the parents of all mankind, they began to multiply and replenish the earth outside of the Garden of Eden **"And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD"** (Gen 4:1).

The name Eve came after Adam called her woman. The name Eve simply represents the mother of all mankind in prospect of all those who have, are, and will populate the Earth.

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I would first like to answer this question and then give a brief explanation why I believe the way I do. "Doesn't this verse (Genesis 3:20) prove that there had to be at least two others (children) if Eve "was" the mother of all living since God created both her and Adam?" and my answer is No, this verse does not prove there were others (children)! It should go without saying that, **"Eve "was" the mother of all living."**

First, let me be honest and say, yes at one time I did believe there were children born in Eden before the fall as

the questioner's televangelist believes until a dear Brother of mine asked me this question, "if there were children born before Adam and Eve fell would they not still be perfect in the original state in which they were born" (paraphrased). To say yes, that they would be perfect, (after all, they didn't sin, their parents did, right?) would make God a liar, and we know that is impossible (Rom. 3:4)

"God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar;..." Then one of my favorite Scriptures came to mind, so the reader doesn't put off reading it, here it is, (Psalms 14:1-7) **"To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD. There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous. Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD is his refuge. Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad."**

Also read Romans 3:10-26. There is none, and never was there any that were without sin, none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

So if there were children born in the Garden that did not fall with their parents (I believe it would, again, make God a liar according to Psalms 14 and Romans 3) that would not only make their condition before God having no sin and any offspring's they would have had, would be perfect as well. In fact the Jews argued how they could be held accountable for what Adam did, but a thorough study of Romans chapter 5 will show that they, as well as ourselves, are guilty as was Adam. Consider these two verses:

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of

Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come" (Rom. 5:14).

Paul taught in Rome that there is no perfect human outside of Christ Himself. Adam is the federal head of the human race, Adam sinned willfully and all are the seed of Adam, so we were all in the body of Adam when he sinned. To bring this to a close, because we could spend much more time proving our point, allow me to quote a section from my study Bible concerning Genesis 3:15 which puts it better than I can, "The dispensation of conscience was based on Adam's limited experience with good and evil. He should have remembered the positive results of obedience and the disastrous consequences of disobedience. The Adamic covenant was introduced at the beginning of this period. Under the covenant, the serpent was cursed (v. 14); God promised redemption through the seed of the woman (v. 15); the woman experienced multiplied sorrow and pain in childbearing (v. 16); the earth was cursed (vv.17-18); sorrow, pain, and physical death became part of the experience of life, and labor became burdensome (v. 19). Man failed under this covenant, degenerating to the point where people did only evil continually (6:5) until God judged them with the Flood (cf. 9:12)."

If the reader doesn't see Christ in verse 15, then you've missed the greatest promise of all. The only person that walked sinless was Jesus. The only one that can save us is Jesus. **"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved"** (Acts 2:21).

One last word, this is free it won't cost you a thing...stop listening to a televangelist and find a True New Testament Baptist Church to attend, and if you are a member already, why do you watch televangelists? I have learned they speak in half truths. God Bless!

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There is no indication from Scripture that Adam and Eve had children prior to the fall or even prior to their banishment from the Garden of Eden. If Adam and Eve would have had children before the fall, those children would have been born without sin, and hence not subject to physical death. Are we to suppose that there is an entire race of sinless men and women that came from the womb of Eve prior to the fall? I think not. It is much better to stick with the literal Biblical narrative rather than attempting to claim

you have "new light." Cain and Abel are the first recorded children of Adam and Eve as revealed in Genesis 4:1-2.

When Adam named his wife Eve, which in the Hebrew literally means living, he was affirming his faith in the promise of God stated in Genesis 3:15-16: **"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."** God gave Adam faith to believe that He would fulfill the promise and bring life from the womb of Adam's fallen wife, Eve. As a result, all of mankind traces their existence back to Adam and Eve. Adam is the federal head of all mankind in the sense that in him spiritual death and depravity is inherited by all (Rom. 5:12). Eve is the mother of all living in the sense that she was the first to bear children literally and also prospectively since we all are descendants of Adam and Eve.

John Gill, the Baptist expositor had an excellent comment on Genesis 3:20:

"...and the ground of this faith and persuasion of his, that he and his wife should not die immediately for the offence they had committed, but should live and propagate their species, as well as be partakers of spiritual and eternal life, was the hint that had been just given, that there would be a seed spring from them; not only a numerous offspring, but a particular eminent person that should be the ruin of the devil and his kingdom, and the Saviour of them; and so Eve would be not only the mother of all men living in succeeding generations, but particularly, or however one descending from her, would be the mother of Him that should bring life and immortality to light, or be the author of all life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; and who is called, the life..." (Gill's Expositor, Vol. 1, pg. 29).

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Genesis 3:20 is a marvelous verse of hope and salvation that has become a favorite of mine. But before we get into what it means and reveals, let us first dispatch this false idea of pre-fallen children of Adam and Eve.

Adam is clearly revealed as the federal head of the human race in the fall of man. **"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by**

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Please explain the meaning of Proverbs 7:3 "Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart."

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The wise man is urging his son to keep and cherish the Word of God (Prov. 7:1-5). Solomon, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is also confirming the lasting benefits and rewards that go along with strict adherence to the law of the Lord. All parents should follow the example of Solomon in this regard, by keeping the claims of the Word of God ever before their children. Children must be taught by word and deed to place a high value upon the infallible, inerrant, and inspired Word of the living God. Oh, that God would place within the hearts of parents and children alike, a sincere love and reverence for the Scriptures so that we may say with the Psalmist: **"I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word"** (Psa. 119:14-16).

God's people must regard His Word as a most precious treasure to be kept and preserved in the heart. The reason why God's commandments are to be regarded so highly is because they serve to sustain and strengthen spiritual life. The Word of God is used as an instrument of the Holy Spirit to preserve and purify the soul of man. Sin is the transgression of the law of God which leads to spiritual death and separation from God's presence. Obedience to God's Word strengthens spiritual life and draws us closer to God, enhancing our fellowship with the Almighty. Therefore, we must learn to separate ourselves from those things which serve to separate us from God, and cherish the truth of the Word which draws us closer to Him. We must cherish and protect the law of the Lord as we would our own physical life. All men cherish their eyes and the gift of sight, likewise we must keep the commandments of God as the apple of our eye.

Proverbs 7:3 simply urges us to not only cherish the Word of God as precious treasure, but as an instrument to govern our daily walk. We are commanded to bind the Word upon our fingers so that all our daily activities will be sanctified by the Word of the Lord. The Word

must also be inscribed upon our heart so that our motives and desires will be pleasing to the Lord throughout the day. Colossians 3:16-17 declares: **"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom...And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."**

Oh, that God would stir us to read, memorize, meditate, and apply the truth of His Word in our daily lives! As living epistles of light and truth we would have a much greater influence for good in our families, our churches, communities, and ultimately the world at large!

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I preached a message called the "University of Wisdom" that used Proverbs 7:1-3 for its text. This passage is like many in the book of Proverbs and also the Bible, that will outline the proper route to righteousness, wisdom, love and holy living. Let me quote the passage here: **"My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart."**

The thrust of this passage is that Solomon would desire his children to **"Keep my commandments, and live..."** How we are to do that is indeed the University of Wisdom! Many folk go to college to learn a trade or a profession. It takes money, devotion and time to succeed at any vocation, but most particularly it will take a sacrificial determination to become 'wise' is the sight of God and His people.

The first step is in verse 2: **"Keep...my law as the apple of thine eye."** This is the textbook stage! We must focus on the law of God as if it were the 'apple of our eye'! You know what the apple of your eye is, don't you? Why, it's the most precious thing in the world to you! Your husband/wife, your children, your family---your God! That's where the center of our universe ought to be! He should have the preeminence and be the priority of every action and will of our life!

We need to STUDY! How else

will any succeed in the University of Wisdom? Read and meditate upon God's Word... You know, when I think of the 'apple of my eye,' it has a beauty that entralls me! I can't take my eyes off it- I can't take my mind away from it- it's the apple of my eye! And that's the first step to graduating with honors from the University of Wisdom- dutifully and lovingly FOCUS on the law of God! Make it the apple of your eye...

The second step is in verse 3: **"Bind them upon thy fingers"** The word bind here is what the Pharisees used to accentuate their hypocrisies: **"But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren"** (Matt. 23:5-11). The problem here isn't really the phylacteries (or small boxes with Scripture within, kinda like a portable Bible back then), but **'they make broad their phylacteries'**. They bound them upon their fingers as a showy display and as you read on, they 'graduated' themselves from the School of Worldly Wisdom and called themselves rabbi, or teacher!

The purport of the word 'bind' here as used is to convey the meaning of 'grasping or seizing'. Therefore the second step in graduating from the University of Wisdom is to 'grasp' and 'reach' for the commandments of God. Not just look on them and adore/study them as in the first step. But now you've got to put them into practice. Get ready for some 'pop quizzes' and some class 'field trips'! God's gonna give you the opportunity to obey and keep His commandments! Get ready to love, worship, and stand for some truth!

The third and final step rightly takes us to the heart of the matter. **"...Write them upon the table of thine heart."** This becomes our life! As we progress through our junior and senior years in the University of Wisdom, we learn and love to make God the tune to which our heart sings! Watch the martyr Stephen graduate with honors in Acts 7:51-60. What else was the apple of his eye? Where was he reaching for? Christ, standing by the right hand of God, his heart's true desire!

Beloved reader, when we graduate from the University of Wisdom, our desires along the way have become the desires of God. I often tell my little flock that the definition of wisdom is: "to think like God thinks." Now that's something! May the Lord help us stay the course in the University of Wisdom. Selah! Think about it! **"...the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold,**

yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb" (Ps. 19:9-10).

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The fingers of our hands are one of the hardest working parts of our body. Consider all the things our fingers do and are a vital part of. Stretched out, our fingers are first to touch anything in front of us. Objects that are in need of being picked up are first felt and tested by our hands.

To bind anything to something is to fasten it, or to make something to be in concert of something else.

To write anything upon the table of thine heart is to commit anything to memory. The thing that is important enough to do so is important enough to live.

The commandments of God are to be as frontlets upon our eyes, all that we employ our efforts to, should first be measured by these. The elect of God are to adhere to His commands always.

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"My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart" (Pro. 7:1-3).

"Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine

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Forum #1

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sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12) Therefore when Seth (and Cain and Abel) were born of Adam, they were in the likeness of fallen man, no longer (as created Adam) in the likeness of Holy God- "...In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth" (Gen. 5:1-3). If there had been any children born in the innocent phase of Adam's life in the garden of Eden, then that child(ren) would have been innocent as well (in their father's LIKENESS!). Only the unborn seed of Adam could fall with him in the rebellion at the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Any perfect child would have to fall, or remain obedient (as angels) on their own! Scripture denies this with the simple phrase above in Romans: "...and so death passed upon all men..."

So what does the "mother of all living" mean? Certainly it could merely mean that the human author Moses was knowledgeable concerning Eve's future of physically being the mother of the human race, but I believe it is more than that. Let's go back to the context of verse 20 and see WHY Adam is quoted as naming his wife this particular name...

First, note that the naming of his wife speaks to her regenerated condition! As you are surely aware of in the preceding verses, Eve was deceived by the tempter and fell into death before her husband. Before he partook of the fruit at her guilty hand, he was not ignorant of her condition- she was dead. "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (I Timothy 2:14). He knowingly chose to die with her, rather than live with his God! Now they are BOTH dead- "...in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

It is no coincidence that the very next verse shows a picture of God's salvation! "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen 3:21). Therefore when Adam looked upon his beloved wife to name her, he knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that he was NOT looking upon a 'dead woman' and the 'mother of all dead children,' but rather the "mother of all living"! Selah! Think about it!

Secondly, please note Adam's faith in this verse! Adam believed God's promise in Genesis 3:15 and so did Eve! The promise was that THROUGH Eve would come the Messiah- the "seed

of the woman"! With a firm faith in God's promise to save the human race through this special woman, what else could Adam have named her, but- "the mother of all living" or the "mother of the Eternal Life to come"?! Selah! Think about it! Praise God! Romans 4:18-25- "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:18-25).

MATTHEW STEPP



Forum #2

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heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (Deut. 6:1-12).

Deuteronomy 6:1-12 and Proverbs 7:2 explain Proverbs 7:3. This is a great question and the verse in question, should be followed to the utmost without wavering. It is one of many favorite Scriptures I hold dear. It is an area, I believe, where many Christians have failed to see how important it is.

As I said, Deuteronomy 6:1-12 explains the verse 3 in Proverbs, let us break it down for the questioner and for you dear reader. We see in (vv. 1-2) of Deuteronomy that God is about give the Hebrews and us His commandments, statutes, and judgments to teach us and for us to remember when they/we go into the land He has prepared for us. Verses 3-6 tell that we should hear and do it and love Him with all that is in us. Verse 7 says we are responsible to teach them DILIGENTLY to our children (how we have failed in that one) every time we sit down with someone to talk about them, when we walk, lay down, and when we rise up to always have His commandments, statutes, and judgments on our minds.

Now here is where Proverbs 7:3 comes in. Deuteronomy 6:8 says, "And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." "Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart." (Pro. 7:3) The Binding on the hands and fingers are the same as well as the "frontlets between thine eyes" and "upon the table of thine heart." Frontlets were passages of Scriptures worn on the forehead or between the eyes. Jews followed scriptural commands, literally. The commands would be on small scrolls, placing these in leather containers on their forehead and left arm (Exodus 13:9, 16; Deuteronomy 6:8; 11:18). The Holman Bible Dictionary says, "By the New Testament times, the frontlets were known as phylacteries (Matthew 23:5). Jewish men wore phylacteries during prayer times, except on the Sabbath and feast days. It goes on to say, phylacteries bound with thongs to the forehead, though some phylacteries were worn on the upper arm so that when a person crossed their arms the Scriptures contained in the phylactery would be close to the heart (which to me would be a sign of "write them upon the table of thine heart.") Holman goes on to say that, (which I find very interesting) Jesus condemned individuals who called attention to themselves by wearing larger than usual phylacteries (Matthew 23:5)." Verses 9-12 basically are saying if you do this, that our days will be prolonged and His eyes will be on the land where in we dwell.

Also I would like to point out that "bind them upon thy fingers" means to write Scripture on a ring that is on your finger, a lot like wearing a wedding ring to remind us of our vows we took with our spouses and you've heard, I'm sure, how one should place a string on our

finger to remind us to do something. Well the Jews did the same thing. Again, it was to remind them to keep His commandments, statutes, and judgments on their minds and in their hearts.

Before I close, I would like to tell you a little story. I got this idea from my dear brother-in-law whom I dearly love as if he were my own brother in the flesh. He has two daughters, whether he was the originator of it or not, I don't know. I share this with you in hopes that moms and dads might use it. "When my daughter turned 16, I went out and bought her a ring, and then I took her out to dinner on her birthday, just her and I. After, or maybe before, we ate I gave it to her with these words, 'I would like you to wear this until you marry, and every time you are alone with a boy and the moment gets heated, that you will look upon this ring and remember that I asked you this day to keep yourself pure until the day you marry the man you fall in love with.' I was asking her to bind it upon her finger to remember my words to her. Well, I can tell you it was a wonderful moment and there were many tears and I can assure you with all of my being, that our daughter was a virgin before she was married...I have no doubt in mind at all."

The sad part is we have failed to follow God's commandments, statutes, and judgments. Oh, sure, I have seen the Ten Commandments many times in front yards, but it is mainly for show, and I know Christians that have them by their front doors inside their houses and when they leave they can look up and see them on their way out. Many of our churches have them hanging on their walls, which they should. But it goes further than that; we are to teach them to our children, grandchildren, put Scriptures on the door post, talk about them, not just in passing but passionately, when we sit down, when we stand up, when we go to bed, and when we get up in the morning. In fact, I tell our people that before our feet hit the floor in the morning we should be praising and asking God to help keep Him in our thoughts and minds all the day long. I have a sign in my office at home that has Psalm 27:1 written on it, and another in the office of the mission, 'what part of "thou shalt not" don't you understand; and I even try to have calendars hanging up that have Scriptures on each month, and I would imagine many of you do also. When I worked I had little cards with daily Scriptures on them, they were to help keep my mind on God.

We have failed. How do I know? Just look at our children today, teenage pregnancy is at an all-time high, and the world's answer is birth control. But God's answer is ABSTINENCE, that goes for adults as well. And the sorry way our people worship, if they even worship

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at all, it's more about what is the best excuse they can come up with instead of laying the Word of God on their hearts. Dear reader you mark it down, **"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"** (Gal. 6:7).

I hope this is a well-received and a thorough enough answer to the questioner, and you dear reader. May God be pleased to give us the desire to, **"Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart"** (Pro. 7:2-3). God Bless!

ROGER REED



A Study in Leviticus

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and (as we shall see in the next chapter, as God wills) cleansed. Both Moses and Aaron are here addressed, Moses as the mediator of the law, and Aaron as the high priest under the law to whom the particular duty of identifying true cases of leprosy would belong, along with his sons. **"When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, a scab, or bright spot . . . like the plague of leprosy; then he shall be brought unto Aaron the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests."**

Leprosy was an affliction which was identified by examination of certain peculiarities in the flesh. This disease was most grievous and loathsome. This is how all sin appears in the light of God's Word: as Paul said of his own sin when revealed by God's holy law, **"But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful"** (Rom. 7:13). Leprosy, a physical disease, symbolizes sin, the nature and effects of which are similar in the spiritual realm to those of leprosy in the physical realm. God uses this sort of symbol elsewhere in Scripture to speak of sin (Ps. 103:2-3; Isa. 1:4-6).

In these beginning verses, God gives a summary of the indications of leprosy which would lead to a person being examined by the priest, and the pronouncement which would be made in the case of actual leprosy. The indications of actual leprosy were in the hair being turned white, **"and the plague in sight be deeper than the skin of his flesh."** Sin is not an outward malady, but an inward plague with outward manifestations (Matt. 15:18-20).

"This was an emblem of sin, and the corruption of nature, which is an uncleanness, and with which every man is defiled, and which renders him

infectious, nauseous, and abominable; and of which he is only to be cured and cleansed by Christ, the great High Priest, through His blood, which cleanses from all sin. The above signs and marks of leprosy may be observed in this; the white hair denoting a decay of strength, (Hos. 7:9) may be seen in sinners, as in the leper, who are without moral and spiritual strength to keep the law of God, to do anything that is spiritually good, to regenerate, renew, convert, and sanctify themselves, or to bring themselves out of the state of pollution, bondage, and misery, in which they are; and, like the leprosy, sin lies deep in man; it is in his flesh, in which dwells no good thing, and in which there is no soundness; it does not lie merely in outward actions, but it is in the heart, which is desperately wicked; for the inward part of man is very wicked."¹

The outward manifestations of sin vary, just as the outward manifestations of leprosy; but the verdict is the same: **"the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean"** (Lev. 13:3). When leprosy was indicated, the pronouncement was **"unclean"**. There is nothing here mentioned with regards to the priest except his inspecting and condemning, as it were, the leper: and this is all which the law does to any person, inspects him or her and pronounces him or her guilty, condemned already, and full of iniquity before God (Rom. 3:9-21).

II. VERSES FOUR THROUGH EIGHT.

The general case of leprosy having been introduced in the preceding verses, we now note specific cases and types, or manifestations, of the dreaded disorder. Sin appears in many forms, as did this leprosy. Many today are wont to say that they are not sinners because they do not sin after the manner of some other person. One man's leprosy arising in a different form than someone else's did not make that first man to be whole: he was still a leper. Simply because you have not manifested the same outward sins as someone else does not change the fact of your sins, or the fact that you are guilty before God and spiritually dead outside of Jesus Christ (James 2:9-11).

In doubtful cases which did not immediately present themselves as clearly leprous, the person who had the infirmity in his flesh was **"shut up . . . seven days"** by the priest, quarantined, as it were, for further examination following the appointed duration of confinement. Sin is not always manifest in its grossest or basest form at the first. Yet, sin left to itself will grow and spread, consuming the whole being and life of the individual sinner (Rom. 7:5). The law reveals the motions of sin in a person, the lusts, the ungodly thoughts, the carnal appetites, the God-less reasoning, and the enmity against God and true holiness.

III. VERSES NINE THROUGH SEVENTEEN.

Leprosy is spoken of in the worst of terms, namely that of a **"plague."** Sin is a plague, a plague upon and in the souls and minds and lives of men, women, boys, and girls. The former case being that of a **"bright spot"** or **"scab"** in the skin, there is now set forth the case of a **"rising"** wherein there is **"quick raw flesh."** This is a type of sin, which proceeds, or is manifest, in the flesh, the fallen nature with which all people are born (Ps. 51:5; 38:3-7). Paul said, **"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not"** (Rom. 7:18). This was **"an old leprosy in the skin of his flesh;"** and the sin which is in men, women, boys, and girls is an old plague, which was in their first parents, Adam and Eve, and has been in every person since save Jesus Christ, in whom there is no sin, seeing that He is the only begotten of God (Rom. 5:12).

The case of leprosy that had **"covered all"** of a person's flesh and was **"all turned white"** was to be pronounced clean. This case was one in which there was no contagion, for there was no **"raw flesh,"** no infected or putrid flesh in the skin, but only a scaly white disorder of the skin. There is indicated here that the leper had hope that he or she might be healed. This person was to be pronounced clean. The sinner cannot be clean until he sees that he is all covered with sin; and then he can say, **"God be merciful to me a sinner"** (Luke 18:13). Only God can pronounce the sinner clean: **"It is God that justifieth"** (Rom. 8:33).

IV. VERSES EIGHTEEN THROUGH TWENTY-EIGHT.

There is now mentioned the case of leprosy broken out where a boil had been. The boil may have healed, but now leprosy had arisen visibly in that spot. Next the case is given of an inflammation, or **"hot burning"** in the skin. This may be a spot where the skin was burnt, and there is formed an irritation from the burning. The signs of warning were **"a bright white spot, somewhat reddish, or white."** The indication of leprosy was **"if the hair in the bright spot be turned white, and it be in sight deeper than the skin."** Sin has various forms and appearances, but the source of sin is the same, the depraved nature and wicked heart residing within every man, woman, boy, and girl (Eccl. 7:20, 29). The priest would make the pronouncement, declaring the person with these symptoms **"unclean."** This is the pronouncement of the law towards sin: **"unclean"** – guilty, condemned (Gal. 3:10).

In questionable cases, the priest **"shut up"** the person with these symptoms for **"seven days,"** after which time another examination was made. If the symptoms **"spread much abroad in the skin,"**

then the priest pronounced the person unclean. One of the characteristics of sin is that it spreads, and that of its own power. If you entertain a foolish thought or associate with foolish people, you will begin to behave like a fool. Sin in thought becomes sin in deed, and sin in deed becomes sin in habit. **"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"** (Gal. 5:9). **"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death"** (James 1:15).

V. VERSES TWENTY-NINE THROUGH THIRTY-SEVEN.

Not only do we see leprosy here in various forms, but also in various parts of the body: **"If a man or woman have a plague upon the head or the beard."** Sin is sometimes seen more prevalent in one part of a person's life than in another. Some are great liars. Others are great thieves. Some murder, others commit adultery, and still others worship idols. We have all seen those who were the slaves of some great vice or other, as drinking, gambling, or cursing; and some of us were perhaps so before we were saved, manifesting some one sin to a higher degree than others. Yet we find that sin never remains single, but spreads, affecting other parts of a person, just as this leprosy spread in the body of the one infected therewith.

VI. VERSES THIRTY-EIGHT THROUGH FORTY-FOUR.

The final class of leprosy in a person is described here, that which arose in a man's bald head. Freckled spots and baldness in themselves were not indications of leprosy; but **"a white reddish sore"** was the uprising of leprosy in the head. The pronouncement for one who had this manifestation of leprosy was thus: **"the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean."** This is the spiritual pronouncement of the law against every man, woman, boy, and girl outside of Christ, **"utterly unclean,"** altogether in sin and without hope in the world. Man likes to say that there is some good in everyone; but the law has concluded all under sin and guilty before God (Ps. 14:2-3). **"His plague is in his head."** As this man's leprosy was in his head, so sin is in the head of man, in the mind, in the topmost part which directs and controls all other parts of man's being. The plague of unbelief, of false doctrine, and of reprobate thinking is found in the head of man.

VII. VERSES FORTY-FIVE AND FORTY-SIX.

The leper was shut out from normal society and from the worship services of God. This pictures one who is dead in sin, separated from God and the fellowship of the saints. The leper was like a living dead person, which is the spiritual character of a lost sinner, dead in sins, dead to God, and ignorant of the life that is in Christ

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by faith (Eph. 2:1-3; Num. 12:1-12). Leprosy made one “unclean” as to holy things. The uncleanness of man’s heart through sin separates him from God and the things of God. **“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God”** (Matt. 5:8). All the things which the leper was required to do, have his clothes rent, have his head bare, and have a covering on his upper lip, speak of the wretched estate of the sinner. If any were to approach the leper, he was to cry, **“Unclean, unclean”** to warn of his condition and that others may avoid him.

“All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.” This denotes the true spiritual condition of the sinner, and the condition in which all those who die in their sins shall remain, spiritually filthy in the sight of God and separated from His eternal favor and blessings (John 8:24; Rev. 22:11-15). Thanks be to God there is One who came and **“suffered without the gate”** (Heb. 13:12), who came near to those unclean and defiled by sin, and bore the reproach

of sin upon the cross for all who will believe (II Cor. 5:18-21; Mark 2:17).

VIII. VERSES FORTY-SEVEN THROUGH FIFTY-NINE.

Leprosy in garments is a picture of sin in a person’s walk, the way of life and the course taken in life. As leprosy in a person speaks of sin which is within, in the heart, and manifests itself outwardly; so leprosy in a garment speaks of the corrupting influence of sin upon the whole manner of life (Col. 3:5-9; Eph. 4:17-19). A garment may be washed, and yet the leprosy would remain. Sin may be glossed over with outward religion and reformation, but the course of life without Christ is still one of sinfulness and living for things temporal rather than things spiritual and eternal. Those garments which were defiled with leprosy were fit only for burning: **“thou shalt burn that wherein the plague is with fire.”** The end of a sinful life is the lake of fire. Only Jesus can save a person from sin and from serving sin (II Cor. 5:17).

FOOTNOTES

1. Gill, John. *Exposition of the Old Testament* (“The Online Bible,” Larry Pierce, 1994-95).



MRC). This is the righteousness of God (v. 1). It is the righteousness given to the King’s Son. Isaiah tells us: **“But with RIGHTEOUSNESS shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. . . And RIGHTEOUSNESS shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins”** (Isa. 11:4-5) (emph. MRC).

The righteousness of God will be manifest in the King: **“BEHOLD, a king shall reign in RIGHTEOUSNESS”** (Isa. 32:1) (emph. MRC). **“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a RIGHTEOUS Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS”** (Jer. 23:5-6) (emph. MRC).

The capital of the Millennial earth is to be Jerusalem, **“The city of RIGHTEOUSNESS”** (Isa. 1:26) (emph. MRC). **“For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem”** (Isa. 2:3). This law from Christ will never be thwarted by the cross-purpose of man, for everlasting righteousness will exist in the world (Dan. 9:24). Every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be **“HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD”** (Zech. 14:20-21).

Even the subjects of the King are righteous, and they live righteous lives. All the inferior offices of His kingdom will be righteous, and they will rule righteously. **“I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors RIGHTEOUSNESS”** (Isa. 60:17) (emph. MRC).

The world since the fall has never witnessed such a righteous government. The poor have been oppressed by tyrants and the rich. Political bosses and demagogues rule to better themselves, not the people they pretend to serve. Every nation on earth is ruled today by unrighteous men who know not the grace of God. Ever since man was given the right to govern by the Noahic Covenant, he has failed to govern the world rightly for God. Greed for power and material gain has soaked the soil on earth with human blood.

The Millennial Reign will end all of this. In the wonderful world of Christ’s reign crime will not be tolerated. Murderers and thieves will not ravish the countryside. There will be no need of locks on doors or iron bars on windows. There will be no Watergate scandals. The rights of all will be respected by all. Jails and prisons will be emptied. From equator to pole there is to be peace on earth and good will among men.

UNIVERSAL REVIVAL

In the age to come a great spiritual revival will come to the world. The Psalmist said: **“They shall fear thee**

as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth” (vv. 5-6). At Pentecost the world saw a foretaste of this time, but in this present time we have only tasted of **“the powers of the world to come”** (Heb. 6:5). In the Millennium the dream of the post-amillennialists will be realized under the rule of King Jesus.

King Emmanuel shall come as rain from heaven when the world of humanity is like mown grass upon the earth. He shall come like showers of water upon a dry and parched earth. The word “showers” indicates distinct seasons of definite blessings. The kingdom of Christ will bring a mighty reviving upon a spiritually depleted world.

The nation of Israel will be converted and their sins blotted out **“when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord”** (Acts 3:19-20). Through the fall of Israel **“salvation is come unto the Gentiles”** (Rom. 11:11). When Israel is regenerated and restored she will enjoy the fullness of the Spirit (Isa. 44:3). If her fall brought salvation to the Gentiles, what will her fullness bring (Rom. 11:12)? I believe it will bring about the greatest world-wide revival in the history of man---a thousand times greater than the Pentecostal revival following the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Many Old Testament passages refer to this time. **“And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD”** (Ezek. 37:14). **“Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD”** (Ezek. 39:29). The same is taught in Ezekiel 11:19-20 and 36:26-27.

The converted nation of Israel will preach the gospel of Christ to the Gentile world: **“And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles”** (Isa. 66:19).

Imagine, if you can, the results of sending thousands of men over the earth of the caliber of the Apostle Paul to preach the good news of salvation! The untold blessing of this time is foretold in the promise of the Lord in Joel 2:28, 32: **“I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh. . . And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said,**

◊ (Continued on page 75)



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Millennial Reign of Christ

Many believe that Psalm 72 is a Psalm of David when he had made Solomon king. Others hold that David cast the form near his death and Solomon penned the words for his father. Some linguists say the inscription should read: “A Psalm of Solomon,” rather than “A Psalm for Solomon.” Perhaps Elder C. H. Spurgeon was right when he said Psalm 72 was “the prayer of David, but the Psalm of Solomon.”

Most a-millennial and pre-millennial scholars agree that this Psalm points to the Messiah’s kingdom, although they are not agreed on what the Messiah’s kingdom really is. A-millennialists would say it points to God’s blessings on the church. Others say it typically sets forth the Messiah’s kingdom, while the literal application is to the kingdom of Solomon. Still others, like myself, maintain this to be a Messianic Psalm; that is, one which is a prophecy about the Millennial Kingdom. A greater than Solomon is under consideration here in my estimation.

That the Messianic Kingdom is the literal meaning can be seen from a number of facts: First, the writer speaks

of a universal kingdom in verse 8. Solomon never had such a kingdom.

Second, the kingdom of this Psalm is to last as long as the sun and moon (vv. 5, 7, 17). Such was never true of Solomon’s kingdom. Third, all nations are subject to the King of this Psalm (vv. 9-11). This never happened during the rule of Solomon. Fourth, the subjects of this kingdom are saved by the King (vv. 12-13) and all nations are blessed in Him (v. 17).

Without a doubt, this Psalm belongs to Christ, not Solomon. All the events mentioned in it are literally to be fulfilled when the Son of God assumes the crown rights of King David and sets up the kingdom of Heaven on earth. This Psalm reveals the wonders of the Millennial Reign. By a study of this Psalm we see the characteristics of the future reign of Jesus Christ over the earth.

UNIVERSAL RIGHTEOUSNESS

The golden age to come will be a time of world-wide righteousness: **“He shall judge the people with RIGHTEOUSNESS”** (v. 2) (emph.

A Dose of Reality

"Common Sense Comments"

by Joseph Harris

Chairman of Biblical Studies
Southeastern Baptist
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Absolute Absolutes

A law expresses an absolute, and an absolute establishes authority. If there is one thing liberals hate, it is an absolute authority. Where does authority begin? It must have a source. There are basically two views that contradict one another: 1) Authority is derived from man, as groups collectively bestow power upon government or magistrates to govern the people, and 2) Authority is derived from God – then man organizes government, based upon the commandments and principles of God. If authority comes from man, then there are no absolutes. What man deems to be wrong is indeed wrong, as long as man declares it to be wrong. But if man decides to change the law, then what was wrong is no longer wrong. However, if God declares something to be wrong, then an absolute is established, which is immutable.

Thomas Hobbes, 1588-1679, was a British philosopher and infidel, who advocated the idea that authority is derived from man under the common consent of the governed. But if authority comes from man, then nothing is moral or immoral, but amoral. According to English philosopher John Locke, who was diametrically opposed to the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes, fundamental rights were the right to "life, liberty and estate," estate being the right to own property. Thankfully, our Founding Fathers subscribed to the philosophy of John Locke, as reflected in some of the founding documents. The phrase "unalienable rights" from the Declaration of Independence speaks of authority that transcends man. Unalienable rights are sometimes called natural rights. Unalienable means they are fixed and not contingent on or awarded by human power. The right to life is an unalienable power.

All three of these rights, life, liberty and property, are being challenged increasingly in America. The right to life was challenged and blown away years ago, when the right to murder innocent, unborn children in the womb was legalized. Our liberties are under fire as an ever-growing government continues to encroach on "we the people" with insane rulings by agenda-driven judges, from the right to own firearms, to the right to disagree with and voice an opinion against that which is perverse and abnormal, in the realm of what defines marriage and

family. And certainly, the right to own property is challenged through eminent domain cases, with an increase in abuse, as a philosophy of socialism continues to grow among elected officials. By its own admission, the federal government owns more than 600,000,000 acres of land with this amount increasing every year. Woven into the fabric of the founding of this nation was the right to own property.

Ultimately, the recognition of an ultimate authority points to The Ultimate Authority, the God of the universe, Jehovah God of the Bible. And this is why people kick against the idea of absolutes and authority so vehemently. If there is a God, then we must all face Him one day, and standing before Him means accountability to authority. A prevailing theme throughout the Bible is the theme of authority. Whether the story is the Garden of Eden, Israel in Egypt or the Promised Land, the saga of the united and divided kingdoms, Jesus in the Gospels or the presentation of the King of Kings in the book of Revelation, authority is the final issue. Will man rebel against God, or will man submit to God? That is always the final issue. Either God is the absolute authority of the universe, to which all men are accountable, or He is not. If He is not the final authority, then nothing matters, man can live as he chooses and die, with no reward or punishment. Or man can submit to God, through repentance and faith in the blood of Jesus, live for Him, keep His commandments and enter into the joy of his Lord at death.

You know, if I'm wrong and atheists are right, then no one has to give account to a higher power. But if I'm right ... you tell me the best common-sense choice.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13).



The Millennial

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and in the remnant who the LORD shall call. This is to happen when **"the LORD dwelleth in Zion"** (Joel 3:17, 21) and Jerusalem **"is the city of the great King"** (Matt. 5:35). Oh, glorious day when **"the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea"** (Isa. 11:9).

Our world today goes from bad to worse in all areas. Most of our churches are cold and formal. Many are in a state of apostasy or non-existent. A number of Baptist churches have not known true revival in 40 years. If they had one, it would scare them to death. Many sovereign grace churches are sound-- that is, sound asleep. Some have such a spiritual deadness that some merciful

soul should have the common decency to bury them to prevent their stinking! But Utopia will end all of this spiritual declension.

UNIVERSAL PROSPERITY

Utopia will be a time of economic prosperity: **"In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth"** (v. 7). Zechariah declares: **"For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things"** (Zech. 8:12). **"I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen"** (Ezek. 36:29-30). The crop will be so productive until the plowman will overtake the reaper (Amos 9:13-15).

The world will then have ideal weather conditions (Joel 2:21-26). Joel says: **"And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied"** (Joel 2:26). A super-abundance of food will be everywhere. There will be no little hungry children. Lack of food and clothing will be a thing of the past. Welfare and poverty programs will be abolished. Labor disputes will end. The burden of national armament is to pass away (Isa. 2:4), liberating much human effort and finance to be used for the good of mankind.

UNIVERSAL DOMINION

The whole world, without limitation or exception, will be under the reign of King Jesus: **"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth"** (v. 8). Another prophet informs us: **"His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth"** (Zech. 9:10). Again he tells us: **"And the LORD shall be king over all the earth"** (Zech. 14:9). **"The uttermost parts of the earth"** will become the possession of the Christ of God (Ps. 2:8). Oh, happy day when **"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever"** (Rev. 11:15).

The Millennial Reign of Christ is the fulfillment of Daniel 2:44: **"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."** What a day when all the nations on earth are united under Jesus Christ! In His time Christ **"shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords"** (1 Tim. 6:15).

Most of the nations of the world today seek to bring about a one-world government of peace and righteousness. But godless men cannot bring peace to

the world by human wisdom. They too often speak of peace when preparing for war. The United States is Satan's attempt to bring about a mock millennium. There will never be a united world government before the Second Coming of Christ. Only then shall **"the nations be glad and sing for joy"** for Christ shall **"govern the nations upon earth"** (Ps. 67:4).

UNIVERSAL SUBJECTION

The world is destroying itself for the lack of competent rulers. The Kingdom of Christ will end this: **"They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. . . .Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him"** (vv. 9-11).

The tongues of the scoffers are ever so eloquent now, but then **"they shall lay their hand upon their mouth. . . They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the LORD our God"** (Micah 7:16-17). In that day every knee will bow and every tongue will **"confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"** (Phil. 2:9-11; Rom. 14:11). The Prophet Daniel declares of this day: **"And all rulers shall serve and obey him"** (Dan. 7:27 margin).

The saints in Heaven are pictured by John crying in anticipation of this wonderful time: **"Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of nations. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest"** (Rev. 15:3-4 margin).

No matter how high their state, how ancient their dynasty, or far-off their realms, all nations will accept Christ as their Imperial Lord. There will be no remote or unconquered nations left under the rule of the Prince of Darkness. Our Lord Jesus Christ will be the central figure, for He shall possess the dominion and dispense the government. Wild and lawless as they may have been, they will all wear the yoke of King Emmanuel.

UNIVERSAL BLESSING

The Millennial Reign is to be a time of untold blessings: **"There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed"** (vv. 16-17). **"There shall be showers of blessings"** (Ezek. 34:26).

Utopia will solve the problems of our cities. The urban renewal program of King Jesus will revolutionize the whole world. **"The city shall flourish like grass"**

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The Millennial

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of the earth. If this is to literally happen, then there will be no pollution or slums. The King of earth's kings will accomplish the job the politicians have utterly failed to do.

"Men shall be blessed in him." Jesus Christ shall truly be seen as the great Benefactor of the world. In this happy time all the nations of the earth will be blessed in the Seed of Abraham, spiritually and materially (Gen. 18:18; 22:18). Men are blessed in Him now by faith, men shall be blessed in Him in the Kingdom Age by sight. All the inhabitants of earth will bless the universal Blessor who made them happy. Jesus Christ is earth's greatest blessing!

UNIVERSAL GLORY

The Messianic Kingdom will fully manifest the glory of God: **"And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his GLORY"** (v. 19) (emph. MRC). The glory of Christ's name now transfigures the soul, then it will transfigure the world. This coming Utopia will be the acme of our desires and the climax of our prayers when we behold the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

Back in the days of Moses, the Lord foretold this age: **"But truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the GLORY of the LORD"** (Num. 14:21) (emph. MRC). The prophet Isaiah says: **"Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign**

in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients GLORIOUSLY" (Isa. 24:23) (emph. MRC). The glory of the Lord will be fully manifested. It will no longer be hidden in a temple or tabernacle, nor concealed behind human flesh. **"In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and GLORIOUS"** (Isa. 4:2) (emph. MRC). **"They shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God"** (Isa. 35:2). This is all the work of Him that is **"glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders."**

The nation of Israel is to have a glorious position: **"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the GLORY of the LORD is risen upon thee. . . .And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising"** (Isa. 60:1-3) (emph. MRC). The Gentile nations will bring their glory **"to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified"** them (Isa. 60:9). The whole planet is to be filled with the glory of the Lord. The Prophet Habakkuk writes: **"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the GLORY of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea"** (Hab. 2:14) (emph. MRC).

*At last every nation, the Lord of salvation,
Their King and Redeemer shall crown!
The Kingdom is coming,
Oh, tell ye the story,
God's banner exalted shall be,
The earth shall be full of His knowledge
and glory,
As waters cover the sea.*



conservatives on campus. Professors told Forese, chairman of the Higher Education Innovation and Reform Committee, that their peers' antithetical and often hostile perspectives compelled them to mask their religious or political views to protect their jobs and promotional opportunities. Forese filed House Bill 2770 on Feb. 8 with the support of the Center for Arizona Policy, a conservative family policy council. The bill prohibits state schools from hiring, firing, or denying promotion or tenure based on political or religious belief. It passed out of committee with a bi-partisan 7-1 vote and awaits a hearing in the House. Forese expects the bill to pass easily in the House and Senate, which are both controlled by a Republican majority. He anticipates Gov. Jan Brewer, a proponent of religious liberty, will sign it into law as soon as it hits her desk.

COURT: PHARMACISTS DON'T HAVE TO DISPENSE CERTAIN DRUGS

(WNS)--A federal court ruled Feb. 22 that pharmacists in Washington state have the right to refuse to dispense "emergency contraception" drugs that could take the life of a preborn baby. Instead, pharmacists who object for religious or moral reasons to dispensing possible abortifacients have the right to refer customers to other pharmacies. The "decision sends a very clear message: No individual can be forced out of her profession solely because of her religious beliefs," said Luke Goodrich, deputy national litigation director for the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, one of the legal firms on the case. "If the state allows pharmacies to refer patients elsewhere for economic, business and convenience reasons, it has to allow them to refer for reasons of conscience."

UTAH LEGISLATURE PASSES ABSTINENCE ED BILL

(WNS)--A bill mandating that schools teach abstinence education or nothing at all is one step away from becoming law in Utah after the Senate passed it on a 19-10 vote Mar. 6. Under HB 363, schools that choose to teach sex education are not allowed to give detailed instructions on intercourse, homosexuality, contraception or sex outside of marriage, but rather to teach children that sexual abstinence until marriage is the healthiest choice. State Rep. Bill Wright based the bill on the premise that parents — not teachers or representatives from Planned Parenthood — are best suited to teach children the things they feel they need to know. The state House of Representatives passed it on a 45-28-2 vote in late February. Gov. Gary Herbert has not indicated whether he will sign the law when it reaches his desk.

FEDERAL COURT TAKES BIBLE READING CASE

(WNS)--The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has agreed to hear a case brought by parents of a child in Tennessee whose school halted his recess Bible studies. Karns Elementary School in Knoxville told

fourth-grader Luke Whitson in 2005 that his Bible studies with other students on the playground had to stop. Samuel and Tina Whitson, Luke's parents, then sued the school. Though the board made an effort to change its policy, the measure fell short of passing. The Whitsons, who are seeking \$1 in damages, pursued the lawsuit because of the First Amendment issues it involves. In 2009, a Knoxville jury sided with the school, and a federal judge turned away the initial appeal, prompting the Whitsons — represented by the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) — to turn to the 6th Circuit.

CHICK-FIL-A FACES OPPOSITION FOR SUPPORT OF CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS

(WNS)--The student senate at Northeastern University, in Boston, voted to end negotiations to bring fast-food chain Chick-fil-A to campus after students protested over the company's affiliation with several Christian organizations the students say have an "anti-gay" agenda. The Atlanta-based company, dogged for months by accusations of homophobia, insists it is "not anti-anybody" but instead simply wants to "graciously serve great food and have a positive influence on all who come in contact with Chick-fil-A." But students from at least 10 campuses aren't buying it. Incensed over the company's Christian values, they opposed new franchises and lobbied for the removal of existing restaurants on campuses across the country. Although the furor has generated a lot of media attention, prompting the company's president to publicly defend its philanthropic affiliations, it's not likely to hurt Chick-fil-A's bottom line. With about 1,540 restaurants in 38 states and annual sales figures topping \$3 billion, the company still has plenty of fans.

STUDIES: CHILDREN RAISED BY LESBIANS NOT PROBLEM-FREE

(WNS)--Over the last few years, a few published studies have claimed that children raised by same-sex couples compare favorably to — and sometimes even better than — children raised by moms and dads on measures of self-esteem and academics. Those studies, in turn, have served as fodder for a media campaign that two loving parents are all children really need. But a closer look at the research, says Glenn T. Stanton, Focus on the Family's director of family formation studies, shows there are quite a few problems associated with those studies — both in the way they were conducted and in what they reveal. According to a study published late last year in the Archive of Sexual Behavior, girls raised by lesbian mothers are seven times more likely to consider a same-sex encounter, and twice as likely to identify as lesbian or bisexual than those raised by heterosexual parents. They are also seven times more likely to use the "morning after" pill.

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THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

Readers of the BBB are urged to submit religious news items which they may read in their local paper or some other publication. In sending these please give the name of the publication as well as the date it was printed. We will not be able to print all which are submitted, but we welcome any item you may feel we should read.

Send them to The Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855-0039.

NYC CHURCHES GET ANOTHER REPRIEVE

(WNS)--New York City churches won back the right to hold Sunday services in the city's public schools after a federal judge issued an injunction Feb. 24 against the city's no-worship policy. District Judge Loretta Preska ruled that the Bronx Household of Faith has a good chance of ultimately winning its lawsuit claiming the policy violates freedom of religion. Her ruling will allow all affected churches to resume holding services in schools while the lawsuit against the city, Bronx Household of Faith vs. Board of Education, continues. In her ruling, Preska wrote, "In this court's view, losing one's right to exercise freely and fully his or her religious beliefs is a greater threat to our democratic

society than a misperceived violation of the Establishment Clause."

ARIZONA MOVES TO PROTECT CONSERVATIVE PROFESSORS

(WNS)—Arizona -- the last of the 48 contiguous states to join the Union -- just celebrated a Valentine's Day centennial. Though late to join the nation, this state may become the first to pass an affirmative action bill protecting university and community college professors from viewpoint discrimination. After visiting with university professors and faculty at public colleges across Arizona, State Rep. Tom Forese (R) decided that the Arizona Board of Regents' broad anti-discrimination policy didn't offer enough protection to religious

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LITTLE TO NO DIFFERENCE IN SOUTHERN BAPTISTS AND CATHOLICS?

In a recent article in the Tupelo Daily Journal (Tupelo, MS), covering the visit of Senator Rick Santorum, the chairman of the Republican Executive Committee of Lee County stated the following about the senator, "He's Catholic, but when you look at what Catholics and Southern Baptists believe, it's the same thing-except we don't have a pope."

It's evident the chairman has little to no knowledge on the subject he is talking about. A brief look at what both believe tells a different story.

WISCONSIN RETURNS SEX-ED DECISIONS TO SCHOOLS

(WNS)--The Wisconsin Legislature recently repealed a law mandating that comprehensive sex education be taught in schools — allowing educators to decide what kinds of lessons are appropriate for their students going forward. The measure, which the governor is expected to sign, requires schools that choose to teach sex education to emphasize the fact that abstinence is the only foolproof method of birth control, and that marriage has the greatest socioeconomic benefits for individuals and society. In contrast to the former law, schools are no longer required to teach about contraceptive methods approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Mary Ann Mosack, vice chairman of the National Abstinence Education Association advisory board, said the bill empowers school districts to plug in the values of its community. "This particular bill allows local school districts and parents to choose an abstinence-centered program, which was prohibited in the former law," Mosack said.

VIRGINIA ATTORNEY GENERAL STEPS INTO CHURCH PROPERTY CASE

(WNS)--Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli on Feb. 22 jumped into a church property dispute that is roiling some of the oldest congregations in the state. The case involves seven churches that have left The Episcopal Church over doctrine. In January, a Virginia circuit court ruled that the Diocese of Virginia, not the local bodies, owns the property of the seven churches and gave the congregations until April 30 to vacate the buildings. The ruling also indicates that all local church funds and other items at the churches belong to the diocese. But Cuccinelli filed a brief with the court noting that since 2003 most members of the seven churches had specified on their checks that they wanted their donations only to go to the local congregations. The churches and Cuccinelli argue that the local bodies should be able to keep those funds. "There are statutory and common law

duties to guarantee that charitable funds are spent for the purposes for which they were intended," Caroline Gibson, spokesperson for the Virginia Attorney General's office, said. "Therefore, we felt an obligation to appear and encourage the court to take donor intent into analysis when deciding how to disburse the contributions."

COURT ORDERS OBAMA ADMINISTRATION TO RELEASE PAPERWORK

(WNS)--The Obama administration this week released paperwork showing the details of a grant to a branch of Planned Parenthood in New Hampshire — but it took a lawsuit to get it to do so. Last year, the New Hampshire Executive Council — a group of five councilors who work with the governor to oversee the state's business affairs — denied a grant to Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (PPNNE), which runs six clinics in the state. U.S. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen then appealed directly to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to fund PPNNE directly, bypassing the state. Five days after applying, PPNNE had a \$1 million grant from the Obama administration. New Hampshire Right to Life filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to find out if HHS followed its own rules requiring a competitive bidding process for federal grants. When the Obama administration failed to comply, the group sued, with the help of the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF). On Feb. 24, a federal judge ordered the government to release the documents by April 1 — more than 125 days after receiving the FOIA.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM GROUP NAMES WORST OFFENDERS

(WNS)--The U.S. Commission on International Freedom (USCIRF) today released its annual report listing the nations most prone to violating religious freedom. Countries of Particular Concern (CPCs) most in need of close monitoring by the State Department include Burma, China, Egypt, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam, where governments sanction discrimination and violence against unpopular religious sects — including Christians, Baha'is, Buddhists and Sufi and Uighur Muslims.

EXPERT BLAMES "ISLAMIC THUGS" FOR VIOLENCE IN SYRIA

(WNS)--With the escalation of fighting in the Syrian city of Homs, area pastors are also reporting a significant uptick in the number of Christian deaths, targeted killings, and kidnappings. According to those sources, Islamic militants fighting the regime of President Bashar al-Assad have killed more than 200 Christians in the city of nearly 1 million in recent days, including entire families with young children. They also have kidnapped Christians and demanded ransom

payments. Some have been released, but in at least two cases in Homs the bodies of the kidnapped men were found after ransom had been paid. "What we are hearing firsthand is the exact opposite of what's being reported in Western media," said Victor Atallah, director of Middle East Reformed Fellowship based in Cyprus. "Most Syrians are most frightened of an Islamic takeover in Syria and are fleeing not from the government but from Islamic thugs from all over." Atallah said he had received reports of fighters in the Homs area from Lebanon, western Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia.



GLEANINGS



A German's View on Islam

By Paul E. Marek

I used to know a man, whose family was German aristocracy prior to World War II. They owned a number of large industries and estates. I asked him how many German people were true Nazis, and the answer he gave has stuck with me and guided my attitude toward fanaticism ever since.

"Very few people were true Nazis," he said, "but many enjoyed the return of German pride, and many more were too busy to care. I was one of those who just thought the Nazis were a bunch of fools. So, the majority just sat back and let it all happen. Then, before we knew it, they owned us, and we had lost control, and "the end of the world" had come. My family lost everything. I ended up in a concentration camp and the Allies destroyed my factories."

We are told again and again by "experts" and "talking heads" that Islam is the religion of peace and that the vast majority of Muslims just want to live in peace. Although this unqualified assertion may be true, it is entirely irrelevant. It is meaningless fluff, meant to make us feel better, and meant to somehow diminish the spectre of fanatics rampaging across the globe in the name of Islam.

The fact is that the fanatics rule Islam at this moment in history. It is the fanatics who march. It is the fanatics who wage any one of 50 shooting wars worldwide. It is the fanatics who systematically slaughter Christian or tribal groups throughout Africa and are gradually taking over the entire continent in an Islamic wave. It is the fanatics who bomb, behead, murder, or honour-kill. It is the fanatics who take over mosque after mosque. It is the fanatics who zealously spread the

stoning and hanging of rape victims. It is the fanatics who teach their young to kill and to become suicide bombers. The hard, quantifiable fact is that the "peaceful majority," the "silent majority," is cowed and extraneous.

Communist Russia was comprised of Russians who just wanted to live in peace, yet the Russian Communists were responsible for the murder of about 40 million people.

The peaceful majority were irrelevant. China's huge population was peaceful as well, but Chinese Communists managed to kill a staggering 70 million people.

The average Japanese individual prior to World War II was not a warmongering sadist. Yet, Japan murdered and slaughtered its way across South East Asia in an orgy of killing that included the systematic murder of 12 million Chinese civilians — most killed by sword, shovel, and bayonet. And who can forget Rwanda, which collapsed into butchery? Could it not be said that the majority of Rwandans were "peace loving?"

History lessons are often incredibly simple and blunt, yet for all our powers of reason, we often miss the most basic and uncomplicated of points:

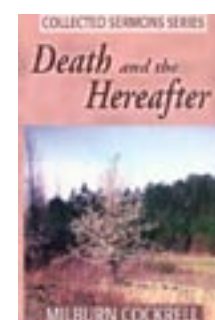
1. Peace-loving Muslims have been made irrelevant by their silence.
2. Peace-loving Muslims will become our enemy if they do not speak up, because, like my friend from Germany, they will awaken one day and find that the fanatics own them, and "the end of their world" will have begun.
3. Peace-loving Germans, Japanese, Chinese, Russians, Rwandans, Serbs, Afghans, Iraqis, Palestinians, Somalis, Nigerians, Algerians, and many others have died because the peaceful majority did not speak up until it was too late. As for us who watch it all unfold, we must pay attention to the only group that counts: the fanatics who threaten our way of life.

Anyone who doubts that the issue is serious is contributing to the passiveness that allows the problems to expand.

(Watching And Waiting, July-September, 2011).



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Moral Lessons from Loaves and Fishes

How many loaves have ye? go and see (Mark 6:38).

There is a richness of instruction in all the incidents of our Savior's life, which we I fear do not often take the trouble to arrive at. We look at His miracles, for instance, as evidences of His divine power and unwearied compassion. But we rarely proceed further and inquire, what is the moral lesson which the Holy Ghost intended to teach me from the record of these remarkable facts? Thus, in the history of the Syrophenician woman, how perennial a fountain of encouragement to importunate prayer is opened to every humble believer? And, thus, in the miracle from which the text is taken, I think there may be found several lessons which may guide the conscience and encourage the hope of every true-hearted disciple.

Turn ye for a moment to the scene before us. An immense multitude, five thousand men, besides women and children, have followed the blessed Saviour from all the towns and villages in the neighborhood. They have listened to His instructions throughout the live-long day. **"Divers of them came from far."** The burning sun of Syria pours down upon them its scorching effulgence. The strongest are exhausted, the weaker are fainting with heat, famine, and thirst. The dictate of humanity is uttered by the Redeemer in the words, **"Give ye them to eat."** The disciples plead that the thing was impossible. Our Lord commands them to look at their store. The report is discouraging. Their provisions were barely enough for themselves. They had only **"five loaves and two small fishes."** This was, however, no reason for delaying the work of benevolence. The multitude sat down. Our Lord blesses the bread, and the distribution commences. All eat and are filled. But Christianity teaches economy as well as benevolence. **"Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost."** They did so, and twelve baskets are loaded with the remainder, after every one has been satisfied.

Let us now seek for the moral lesson which this narrative is intended to convey. To me it seems to teach in the first place,

1. The smallness of our means forms no reason why we should not engage in the work of benevolence. Who can conceive of more limited means than those of the disciples? Five loaves and two fishes among many thousands. Yet our Lord commands the multitude to sit down. He begins with this little; and He taught us by the event, how a little in the service of God may be greatly increased.

Poor disciple! Your Lord commands

you to be benevolent. You say it is impossible,—that you have no more than you need for yourself I ask you how many loaves have you? Are you so poor that you cannot give one to Christ? Deliberately examine your little store. Have you not two mites, which make a farthing? you have no more, Christ will accept of that she who gave this sum was the noblest benefactor whom the Lord looked upon, among the many donors to the treasury. Has Christ really excluded you from the privilege of the poor widow; or are you excluding yourself!

To the rich I need only say, how many loaves have ye? Your tables are loaded with luxuries. Your wants, nay, your caprices are gratified. If the poor are called upon by Christ to be charitable in their penury, what shall excuse you if you minister not to Him of your abundance? **"Go to now, ye rich men."**

You are a minister of Christ. Your salary is small, and you are obliged to practice economy. You are laboring for God in your calling, and for these reasons suppose that you are excused from the work of charity. My brother, how many loaves have you? Go and see. Look over your means. Lay them all before Christ, and in the presence of the Saviour decide whether you have nothing that you can give Him. Is your calling religious? It certainly ought to be. But is it religious, unless you set an example of religion? You might well not repent or pray because your calling is religious, as to fail to set an example of religion in the matter of charity. With what confidence can you urge benevolence upon your people, unless they behold you practicing what you preach? I fear that this is one cause why you take so little interest in the cause of missions, But you are afraid if your people do any thing for missions they will not pay you your salary. So, then, they are covetous, and you mean to improve them by following their example. If you act on this principle, be not surprised, if you are, in the end, starved away. Begin yourself by bringing the tithes into the Lord's store house.

You are a poor church. You can hardly support yourselves and maintain the gospel. But let me ask you, how many loaves have ye? **"Go and See."** You are living very comfortably. Your tables are never have known want. Your houses are well furnished. Has a perishing world no claim? Has a suffering Saviour no claim on all this? You feel poor, I fear, because you have withheld from God what was His own, and He has sent leanness into your souls.

You are poor, but if your pride required that your house should be enlarged, you could enlarge it. If your pride required you to beautify your meeting house, you could do it. I once heard of a church within the present century, for which it was pleaded as an excuse for not doing more in charity; that they had spent

ten thousand dollars in magnificently repairing and beautifying their meeting-house. There must, in this case, have been loaves enough somewhere.

Are you really poor and weak? Do you wish to be made stronger? Show the world that you love your fellow men. Testify your love to Christ not by words but by actions, and the Lord will pour out a blessing that you shall not have room enough to receive it.

This leads me to remark in the second place.

II. The way to have more, is to obey God in the use of what we have. If we wish to do much good, we must begin to do good in any way, be it ever so small, that God places in our power.

Thus the disciples found it. Their means were small. They began with five loaves and two fishes. The supply continued. They kept on giving and the supply increased. The multitude was filled. They gather up the fragments that remain: their five loaves and two fishes have become twelve baskets full.

III. Let us, however, observe the spirit in which all this must be done. Jesus looked up to Heaven and blessed, as he brake the bread. We must go forward in the work of benevolence in the spirit of charity and of faith. If we attempt to do good from motives of ostentation, or from a hope of being repaid, we shall be inevitably disappointed.

Our Lord acted by miraculous power, but this power was exercised through the means of holy love. He had compassion on the multitude. While we, therefore, call you to follow His example in action, we must as strongly exhort you to follow it in principle, and motive, and temper. Religious charity is not merely giving, it is giving with a heart full of love to the souls of perishing men. It is only this charity that God will bless. This only will He water with the dew of His blessing. Remember then, that without this, your offering is destitute of every element that is acceptable to Him.

It must be done in faith. By this, I mean an unwavering confidence in the veracity, the power and the love of God. This, is that makes prayers and alms all-prevalent with God. This "moves the hand that moves the world." Enlarge your heart until it encompasses the world. Think of the miseries of Hell and the blessedness of Heaven. Think of the love of Christ, by whom is the way of salvation. Remember that Christ has laid upon you the labor of preaching, or sending the gospel to every creature, and has promised, **"Lo I am with you alway!"** Remember that God has promised to do this work when you in confidence in Him attempt it. Enter then into covenant with Him. Commence the work of evangelizing the world; yes, you, the feeblest saint on earth. Pour out your whole soul to Him in behalf of the world. Lay yourself, your talents and property at His feet. Begin to distribute to the whole

multitude of perishing souls, and when you stand on the **"sea of glass mingled with fire,"** you will thank me for giving you this advice.

(The Baptist, May 8, 1874).



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Victory Baptist Church of Chehalis, Washington is in need of a pastor. Any interested brother may call Gerry Greisen at (360) 985-7975, or Mark Fenison at (360) 751-2929.

The Calvary Baptist Church of Piqua, Ohio is in need of a pastor. Any interested party may contact the church at 726 Wilson Avenue, Piqua, OH 45356, or call Terry Allen at (937) 773-9272.

The Amazing Grace Baptist Church of Stockdale, Texas is in need of a pastor. The church believes in preaching and teaching the doctrines of grace and the Lord's church. Any interested brother my contact Bro. Alvin Schuetz at (830) 534-1918 or Bro. Keith Schuetz at (830) 789-2101.

The Bethel Bible Baptist Church, PO Box 85, Mansfield, LA is in need of a pastor. Any interested Elder should call Connie McMellon at 318-872-1647.

The Landmark Baptist Church of Collinsville, IL is in need of a pastor. Any interested Elders may call (618) 288-4236 for more information.

The Windsor Baptist Church at Windsor, IL is searching for a Sovereign Grace pastor. Any one interested may contact Larry Rawlings at (217) 665-3643, or cell (217) 620-4675, or by mail at PO Box 194, Bethany, IL 61914.

The Liverpool Independent Baptist Church of Liverpool, New York (north of Syracuse) is searching for a sovereign grace pastor. The church believes in the doctrines of grace, the local church, and is pre-trib and pre-mil. Interested brethren should contact Bro. Greg Sigworth at (315) 677-3819.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Galena, OH is in need of a pastor. Any interested candidates possessing the qualifications and traits concerning the office as found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are asked to contact either of the following: Bro. Randy Coffey at (614) 871-2406 or email recaffey@aol.com, or Bro. Joe Vass at (614) 846-8699 or email jamijoe@wowway.com.

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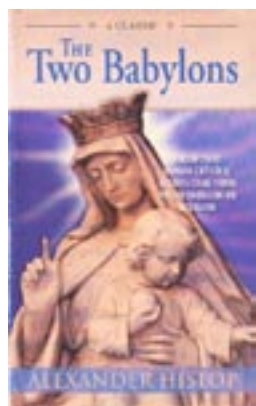
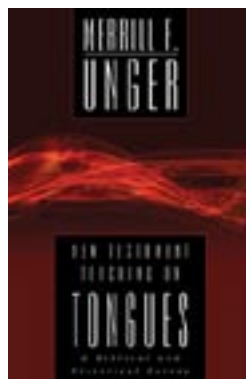


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New Testament Teaching on Tongues by Merrill F. Unger \$11.99

Dr. Unger's concise but thorough examination of all relevant New Testament passages and the evidence of church history will help Christian readers answer questions such as: Is the practice still valid? What positive use or blessing does it have? Does its popularity in modern charismatic circles commend it to the church in general?



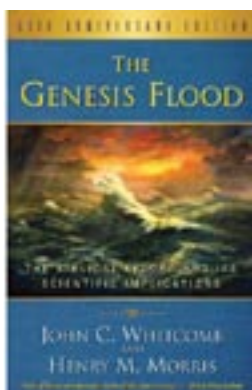
The Two Babylons by Alexander Hislop \$13.95

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GLENZING



No Efforts to Do Good Are Lost

I have heard of some seeds which will sleep in the earth for ages, and I have read of the young of certain insects which lie in a state like death for eighty years together, and yet when the hand which scattered the seed had been mingled with the dust, and when the insect that had deposited the young had ended its flight for generations the seed would come forth a forest of mighty trees, and the slumbering insect wake to life, and become the mother of an endless multitude. And so it may be with us. We are scattering the seeds of knowledge, and piety, and immortality, but we see not the seed spring forth. Our instructions seem to be forgotten; the fruits of our liberality seem to have perished; and our favors appear to have been in vain. But be of good courage; the seed is still in the earth undecayed, and the time will come when it shall spring forth, and yield a plenteous harvest. It is watched over by the God of Heaven, and not a seed shall perish.— The hand that scattered the seed may be withered, but the seed itself shall swell, and send forth its germ, and become a mighty tree. The voice that uttered the sermon may be silent, but others that received the truth shall come and declare it afresh to the generations that are yet unborn. (*The Baptist*, May 1, 1847).

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 2-1-2012 to 2-29-2012

Beginning Balance\$1,745.51

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Anonymous	2,000.00
	2,425.00
TOTAL	4,170.51

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time (US)	250.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$250.00
	\$3,920.51
Interest	+ .07
	3,920.58
Less Corbin, KY des.	-2,243.72
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,676.86

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance\$443.72

RECEIPTS:

Anonymous	2,000.00
TOTAL	2,443.72

EXPENDITURES:

WCTT	200.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$2,243.72

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

2-1-2012 to 2-29-2012

Beginning Balance\$1,028.22

RECEIPTS:

Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	25.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
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Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Bible Believer's B.C., Naples, ID	50.00
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The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	20.00
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New Testament B. C., Bristol, VA	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
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Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	164.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Anonymous	\$1,192.00
Sub Total	\$4,219.45
TOTAL	\$5,247.67

EXPENDITURES:

Printing	581.00
Postage	652.15
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Dividing checks	150.00
Supplies	122.16
Total Expenditures	\$3,981.27
	1,266.40
Bank Charge	13.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,253.40

WATERING THE TULIPS



By Todd Bryant of Northport, Alabama



Who Are You Serving?

“No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Luke 16:13).

Child of God, who are you serving today? The simple approach is to answer, “Well, I’m not involved in any pagan religion. So, I must be serving God.” However, there is one key word in this question that we need to consider – serving. Are you really serving the Lord? Are you daily taking time to converse with Him? Are you studying your Bible daily to learn more of Him? Even more, are you acting out the things that the Bible tells you that you ought to be doing? There is much more to serving the Lord than attending church.

Sadly, we live in a generation when we expect very little as far as service to the Lord is concerned. The average American is not serving God at all. Humanism is the god of our day. The service of “self” is far more widespread than the service of God. It seems many have the idea that we can serve ourselves and God at the same time. But, our text verse says this “cannot” be done. If you are serving yourself, you are not serving the Lord.

The easiest thing to do is to judge yourself by those around you. Perhaps you believe more truth than the next person. Perhaps you attend church more regularly than your neighbor. Perhaps you are not doing certain things condemned in the Bible as the next guy is. However, if we are not careful, we will be like the Pharisee who prayed, **“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess”** (Luke 18:11-12). According to Jesus, this man was not justified (vs. 14). Do not judge your service by any other person. You must judge your service by the life of the perfect Example – Jesus Christ.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break

through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:19-21). As a believer in Jesus, your goal should daily be to lay up treasures in Heaven. This is done by faithfully serving the Lord. One day, this Earth will be burned up and everything in it. Nothing you own here will be possessed eternally. However, spiritual rewards are eternal.

But, where is your heart? Jesus said, **“where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”** Examine your own self. Do not look to your neighbor. Examine whether you are serving yourself or the Lord. This will tell you where your heart is. Perhaps this seems like a tough standard, but these are the words of our Savior!

Child of God, be thankful today that you live in freedom where you have opportunities to serve the Lord. Whatever you do, do not take freedom for granted. We may not always have it. Take advantage of every opportunity you have to serve the Lord in this life. Serve God – not mammon.



Love in the Truth

By Rosco Brong (1908 - 1985)

“The elder un-to the elect lady and her children, who I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth” (II John 1).

Here are try-ing words for Christians who recognize that they ought to love God and imagine that they do have the love of God in their hearts and upon



their lips even while they fail to show the evidences of love described in this short epistle. Whether the “elect lady” was a literal woman whose name John, by the Spirit’s leading, chose not to record for us, as some think, or is another inspired title for the true church of the Lord Jesus, as seems more likely, he wrote that he loved her “for the truth’s sake.”

LOVE OF TRUTH

Love in truth, and for the truth’s sake, is, then, the first great evidence of true Christian love here described. Away with the hypocrites who pretend to love God but hate the truth of God’s Word! **“Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved”** (II Thess. 2:10).

True children of God love their heavenly Father and therefore love and delight in His Word, which Jesus said is truth (John 17:17). **“If a man love me,”** said Jesus, **“he will keep my word”** (John 14:23).

LOVE OF BRETHREN

When John added, in II John 1, that not only he, **“but also all they that have known the truth,”** loved **“the elect lady and her children,”** he made it difficult to believe that he was addressing a mere literal woman or a natural family. Surely not all the people in the world who had come to know the truth could have knowingly loved any one literal woman and her children.

But all of God’s people do, in a general way, love one another, and especially do they that have come to know the truth, love their Lord’s true church and her children (converts).

They who despise the church which Jesus instituted during His personal ministry, and which He promised to be with unto the end of the age (Matt. 28:20), give small evidence of any love they may profess for Him.

LOVE IN OBEDIENCE

Love obeys. **“This is love, that we walk after his commandments”** (II John 6). So the apostle **“rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth”** (verse 4).

Love testifies. Jesus commanded, **“Ye shall be witnesses unto me”** (Acts 1:8). Deceivers and antichrists are “the ones

not confessing Jesus Christ coming in flesh” (II John 7), literal translation). But the true witness of love is that the same Jesus Who arose from the dead with flesh and bones (Luke 24:39), the same Jesus Who in this same visible body ascended to Heaven while His disciples watched, this same Jesus is “coming in flesh.” This is the witness of love.

Love seeks approval and a full reward from our loving Master. **“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward”** (II John 8).

REJECTING ERROR

We cannot love truth without hating falsehood. The same love that draws lovers of truth together demands our separation from teachers of error.

“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (II John 10-11).

JOY IN FELLOWSHIP

Love enjoys the company, the fellowship of those we love. Little love brings little joy in company. This explains why we may sometimes be uncomfortable or even miserable in the company of some people. We have little or no love there.

But love delights in the company of the beloved. So the apostle could write: **“I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full”** (II John 12).

Even so, on the highest plane, if we love God as we ought, **“our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ”** (I John 1:3). So we can truly say with David, **“In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore”** (Ps. 16:11).



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Grace Baptist Bible Church of Denham Springs, LA and Pastor Jerry Dodson would like to announce their Bible conference which is scheduled June 8th thru 10th.

Scheduled speakers are Elders Tom Horn, Larry Wilson, Ted Tweet, Doyal Thomas.

A meal will be served at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, the 8th, followed by services at 6:30 p.m. There will be a noon meal on both Saturday and Sunday. There will also be an evening meal at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday. The conference will conclude at noon on Sunday.

Everyone is welcome. For more information please call Pastor at (225) 664-3223.

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