

# 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*

## The Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ

By Timothy J. Hille  
of Ashland, Illinois

Luke 6:12-16



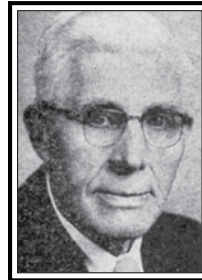
There was a time in Baptist churches when the smallest child who was capable of answering questions was made to memorize the names of the twelve apostles. I do not know if many adult members nowadays know the apostles' names, who they really were, and what their office was as apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is no excuse for us not to know, and not to be fully informed and convicted of the truth: as Luke has set out to describe to us fully in this record of the gospel – **"a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us"** (Luke 1:1), **"... that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been**

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## Just What Is Involved in Living the Christian Life?

By Harm Rust  
(Now in Glory)

The Apostle Paul foretold how things would be in the last days. He wrote, **"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of**



**those that are good. Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God: Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away"** (II Tim. 3:1-5). Farther on he tells us of his doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity,

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## A Short Description of Historic Baptists

By Raul Enyedi  
of Bocsa, Romania

As the preservers of the doctrinal and practical simplicity found in the New Testament, and having a continuous existence from the first Christian century until this day, the original Christians are to be found among the Baptists. Our founder is not a man, but the Sav-



ior Jesus Christ Himself.

In history we have been known under different names which were given to us due to a certain characteristic or a certain leader or place. Novatians, Donatists, Paulicians, Albigenses, Waldenses are just a few of these names. Generally we were known by the deprecatory name "Anabaptists" (rebaptizers). This was because we did not recognize acts performed by churches which we considered not authentic and

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## Christ The Live Coal

By Matthew Stepp  
of Wayne, West Virginia

**"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled**



**the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did**

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## Faith—Where It Comes From

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia

**"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than**



**he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith"** (Rom. 12:3).

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April 5, 2019  
Volume XXXIX, Number 4

Whole Number 477  
Editor: Christopher Cockrell  
Staff: Sheron Cockrell, Marsha Kiser, Virginia Cockrell

THE BEREBA BAPTIST BANNER (UPS 546470) is published monthly for \$6.00 per year by the authority of the Berea Baptist Church, 3881 Highway 363, Mantachie, Mississippi 38855. Periodical Publication postage paid at Mantachie, Mississippi.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE BEREBA BAPTIST BANNER, P. O. Box 39, Mantachie, Mississippi 38855-0039.

PUBLICATION POLICIES: All matter for publication should be sent to the editor. All manuscripts are to be typed and double spaced. All such material becomes the property of BBB and will not be returned unless requested by the writer. We reserve the right to edit and condense all materials sent to us for publication.

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY with paid circulation in most states in the U.S.A. and some foreign countries.

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES - U.S.

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Five years.....\$24.00

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BUNDLES TO ONE ADDRESS: These are sent for \$4 per paper for a year. An example: 10 papers for one year at \$40 or 20 papers for one year at \$80.00.

LOCATION OF PUBLISHING CHURCH: Our church is located on state highway 363 about one mile south of Mantachie, Mississippi. Readers are always welcome to visit our services.

CHURCH PHONE: 1-662-282-7794.

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

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.

## Twelve Apostles

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**instructed"** (Luke 1:4).

Some of you disdain to memorize things, I know. You think that the memorization of names, dates, and happenings are of little consequence to your life; and instead you memorize what time your favorite television show is broadcast, who lives in your neighborhood and who their relatives are and where they work, and whether or not you have shared the latest gossip, and other such things that have no bearing on how well you are holding forth the gospel of your Lord Jesus Christ while you have the ability granted you from God in the few days allotted you on the face of this earth. Whether or not you can recite the names of the apostles, you should know why Jesus called them to be apostles. You should know the extent and purpose of their ministry as apostles, and how it bears upon our service to the Lord today. You should understand the role they played in the work of God; and you should understand the role you play, according to God's will, because you, like them, shall give account of yourself before the judgment seat of Christ and receive according as you have done in your body, whether good or bad. Let us be faithful stewards in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God"** (vs. 12). So momentous was this calling of the apostles, and of such importance in the plan of God, that Christ spent all night alone, separated from the company of all except His heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit, in prayer. He

did not go into a mountain for a more scenic view, or to get some fresh air, or to take a vacation. He went there to pray. He was seeking to escape the company of men so that He might be alone in the company of His God and Father. Was this one, single, nightlong, unending prayer? Doubtful. He prayed three times at least the night He was betrayed in the garden of Gethsemane, leading up to His crucifixion. He perhaps prayed many times this particular night. It was a night of prayer, a night dedicated to prayer. I have spent much of a night praying on only one or two occasions that I can recall, and those were times of deep distress. He did so in seeking to fulfill His Father's will. He was going to select the men who would be His witnesses to the nations, and the first stones laid in the building of His New Testament church, and later churches (Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, Syria, Antioch, and among the Gentiles). He was also knowingly selecting one whom He knew would ultimately betray Him; one who would play the devil's part; one who would kiss Him like a friend, but wound Him like an enemy, and betray a just man to be condemned and crucified as a criminal; one who would have no pity for Him, but would pity himself; one who would typify the devilish, traitorous, lying, hypocritical, deceiving, wonder-working man of sin, the antichrist. A single night of prayer seems hardly sufficient, were He not the Son of man!

I wonder how any in our day think to accomplish anything at all in this life for the honor and glory of God when they are not willing to spend significant amounts of their time separated from all the

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PO Box 39  
Mantachie, Mississippi  
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# Twelve Apostles

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other temporal concerns of life, and from all other connections and fellowships, and kneel, or even prostrate, themselves before God for long hours, when it is not by might, power, wisdom, cunning, confederacy, or alliance that anything shall be accomplished for God's honor and glory, but only by His Spirit! We want to accomplish things that have eternal consequence with the same temporal and fleshly ease with which we heat up our suppers in the microwave; and it shall not be done! The flesh profiteth nothing! Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof! Not my will, but Thine be done! I can do all things through Christ alone, and apart from Him I can do nothing! How much nothing have we done through the wisdom, energy, and efforts of the flesh and fleshly mind? That which is sown to the flesh will reap corruption, turn out nothing but rot and waste, and be for the burning. We live in ever worsening times, if the Scriptures are true; and therefore, more nights spent in prayer are needed than ever before. If we expect our days to be worth anything spiritually, more nights will have to be passed in prayer to God, seeking His face.

**“And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles”** (vs. 13). Christ's praying was not in vain. He prayed throughout the night in connection and cooperation with His heavenly Father's will; and the next day He conducted Himself in connection and cooperation with that will. Many claim to pray, and then there is no corresponding obedience to the

will of God to whom they claimed to have prayed. They are either liars, foolish prayers, or both.

From the large following that Jesus no doubt had at this time, He personally selected the twelve whom His Father would have Him choose (John 15:16). No one advised Jesus as to His selection of the twelve except His Father. He did not first select two or three, and then ask their opinion on the rest. He relied on no human or fleshly aid whatsoever. He exercised complete authority as the Head over all things to His church in ordaining the twelve apostles. The term “apostle” means “messenger,” or “a sent one,” one who has been sent with orders on business for the One who sent him. Jesus did not invent a new word, but used one already in existence, similarly to how He did not invent a new word when He said, “I will build my assembly (or congregation, or “church,” as we have it in our English translations of the Scriptures): He used an already existing word and prefixed it with the possessive pronoun MY to distinguish it from all others and all other kinds. The basic term “apostle” is sometimes used of missionaries in the New Testament, like Barnabas, who went out with Paul, by the leadership of the Holy Spirit. However, the special office that was given only to the twelve, including the ultimate successor of Judas Iscariot who was elected to fill his vacated office; and then additionally to Paul, **“as of one born out of due time”** (I Cor. 15:8), (i.e. one who missed the due date and was premature in relation to Israel's conversion at the visible appearing of Christ), the last of the true apostles, or personally selected eye-witnesses of Jesus Christ, His Person, resurrection, and doctrine. The

twelve were taught by Jesus during His earthly ministry, whereas Paul was taught directly by Jesus following Jesus' ascension to heaven, after Jesus appeared to Paul when he was known as Saul on the road to Damascus. The extraordinary and extreme case of Saul of Tarsus, who came to be called Paul, helps us understand the scriptural office and qualifications of an apostle of Jesus Christ, and why the office ceased to exist when the original apostles departed this life (Gal. 1:1, 10-19; Matt. 19:28; Rev. 21:14; Mark 3:13-19). To be an apostle of Jesus Christ in the same sense as the original twelve, and later Paul, one had to have personally seen, been taught by, and have been chosen by the Lord Jesus Christ. Even the replacement for Judas Iscariot was chosen by God, because when the church at Jerusalem held a business meeting to select between **“Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias ... they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place”** (Acts 1:23-25). These apostles were also empowered by the Holy Spirit to perform the same mighty works which Jesus performed, as the Spirit led, in certification of their office and the truth of which they did witness, that Jesus of Nazareth was incontrovertibly and in very deed the Messiah, the Son of God, the King of Israel, Lord of lords, and the Savior of the world.

These men's lives were now forfeited to the cause of Christ. They were His bond-servants, as it were. They gladly and willingly

followed Him (all but the traitor); and they surrendered their lives over to His will, doctrine, honor, and glory. **“For to me to live is Christ”** (Phil. 1:21); and, **“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard”** (Acts 4:20), were the ruling purpose and priority of their lives until death. They suffered the loss of all things in order to follow after Jesus Christ, please Him, and live in the hopeful anticipation of hearing Him say to them at the judgment, **“Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord”** (Matt. 25:23). As much as men glorify those who suffered loss and deprivation in this life for temporal kingdoms and causes, even of that nation in which we now live, these men chosen by Jesus suffered the loss of all, including ultimately their very lives, for a kingdom which is not of this world, and which will succeed and overcome all other kingdoms, and which shall have no end. They were called unto and submitted themselves willingly and cheerfully to the call of Christ's heavenly kingdom. They were not perfect, but they served a perfect Lord and Savior; they looked for a perfect city which has foundations, which shall come down from God out of heaven, whose builder and maker is the perfect God of glory; they were taught, and subsequently they taught to others, the perfect doctrine of the perfect Teacher, who personally is Wisdom and Truth, and which doctrine perfects all who learn of Him.

Their names:

**“Simon, (whom he also named Peter).”** Simon, the son of Jonas, who, like us, so frequently

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# Twelve Apostles

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displayed the constant warfare between the fleshly nature represented by the name given him by his earthly father, and the spiritual nature represented by his heaven-given name. He is named first, and he was first in many ways. He was the one whom Christ would have to be the first pastor, at least for a time, of the first church at Jerusalem after Christ's ascension, taking the oversight of the flock; to which he was suited because he loved the Lord Jesus Christ more than any other person or thing in life (even his previous lifelong pursuit of fishing), which was the only job interview question the Lord asked Simon Peter when He charged Peter with the oversight of that first flock: **"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these"** (John 21:15)? His heaven-given name, **"Peter,"** the same as Cephas, means a stone. He was a building block, or stone, in the Lord's kind of church. What an elevation from a swearing and cursing, uneducated and ignorant fisherman from the no-account region of Galilee, to a foundational building block in the church of the living God, part of the very foundation thereof, being an apostle and prophet, joined hard up against the chief cornerstone Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ! Let it be said of Simon Peter, **"What hath God wrought!"** (Num. 23:23). He is a trophy of God's amazing grace.

**"And Andrew his brother."** Andrew had followed Christ first, and brought his brother Simon to Christ, per John the beloved apostle's account. Yet, Simon is far more noted and seems to have taken the forefront. The last shall be first, and the first last,

is ever the way with our Lord. To bring one's earthly brother to Christ, and to be granted of heaven to be brothers in grace and truth, not in flesh only, is an high gift! And often it has been the case that God has used someone to bring another to the saving knowledge of the Lord, as far as human instrumentality is concerned; and that one who was brought to the Lord surpasses the one who brought them in service to God for the gospel's sake. All the honor and the glory belong to God alone, through Jesus Christ! God giveth the increase!

**"James and John."** Two more brothers. These, along with Simon, formed, as we often call it, the inner circle. They were called upon to accompany Christ in ways and at times that the others were not. James was the first of the apostles to die for the cause of Christ, being beheaded by Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12). John suffered exile in old age, and was left to die on the isle of Patmos, where he was charged with writing down and sending to the churches the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the closing book of Scripture.

**"Philip and Bartholomew (or, Nathanael)."** Two brother-like friends. Philip was instrumental in bringing the skeptical Nathanael to the Lord Jesus Christ. No better friend can be had in this life than one who wants you to know and be in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

**"Matthew and Thomas."** We know of no previous connection between these, but the author continues to give us the names in pairs. Christ would later send the twelve out in pairs, and perhaps this was the pairing. That two or more are joined in this life because of the common salvation, and in service to the name of Jesus, is

the greatest reason for fellowship and unity that can be known in this life. "Fellow laborers" and "laborers together with God" is the highest privilege and station available to us in this life. We should count those dearest who count Christ dearest. Matthew is the same as Levi, who was before this a publican, or tax collector. Thomas is known most famously as "doubting Thomas," and in that way was used of God to illustrate that great glorious truth, **"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed"** (John 20:29); and for whom many of us ought to likewise often be called, "Doubting Timothy" and "Doubting \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in your name here)".

**"James the son of Alphaeus."** This is the same James who was called "the Lord's brother," being of near kin to the Lord. Alphaeus was perhaps a relative of Mary, the mother of Jesus. He is sometimes called "James the less," to distinguish him from James the brother of John.

**"Simon called Zelotes,"** so called to both distinguish him from Simon Peter, as well as because of the former religious sect to which he previously belonged. Think of how often people have stated concerning someone of note, "he used to be a Such-and-Such." I do not recall how many times people have said to me, upon meeting me, who had either met or heard of my grandfather, whom many of you knew and heard preach, "Was he not a converted Roman Catholic?" So you can see how that what a man was sometimes is used to identify him even after he is no longer what he was, by the grace of God. We often think of Peter, James, and John as the fisherman from Galilee, even though they were called away from and forsook that venture

to be for the remainder of their lifetime fishers of men. Can many of us not continually give thanks to God that we are not now what we once were, that we are no longer followers of the foolishness we once believed and followed, and that He has enlightened us through the saving knowledge of His Son Jesus Christ, and called us to walk in light and no longer in darkness and deceit; and that He has forgiven us for so long continuing in ignorance and unbelief of the truth?

**"Judas the brother of James."** The first apostle named Judas. He was the brother of James the son of Alphaeus, and is also called Lebbeaus, surnamed Thaddaeus, and I take him to be the author of the epistle of Jude. Another set of brethren among this little band of twelve! How gracious is our Lord, that He is often pleased to not only save one of a city, and two of a family – which of itself is exceeding gracious – but that He often calls to both salvation and special service several from a single household or family! Let us look upon this and be encouraged to pray that it may be so with our households, and in our families, and amongst our church, that more and more would be called to life and light and faithful service to the name of Jesus!

**"And Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor."** He gave no signs of being the traitor when chosen, but would ultimately manifest that which was both in his heart, and which entered it, even the devil. There is nothing to prevent any of us, from the least to the greatest, from being identical to Judas Iscariot, in devilish conduct, hypocrisy, deceitfulness, and unfaithfulness, other than the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was written

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# Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of  
Plant City, Florida



## NEVERTHELESS FOR DAVID'S SAKE

**"Nevertheless for David's sake did the LORD his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem: Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life..."** (I Kings 15:4-5).

Oh, soul, what things has the Lord done for you because of the sake of someone else? Here is Abijam—David's great grandson—yet the Lord was still doing things for David's sake. Contemplate what things God has done for you that have been merited by others. Was not Ishmael blessed because of Abraham? **"And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed"** (Gen. 21:13). Meditate for a moment, oh soul, those inestimable blessings God has showered you with for the sake of another. I cannot but think of how much I owe for the faithfulness of those before me. My grandfather and my earthly father who were not sinless (nor ever claimed to be), but did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. What has the Lord done for me because of their sake? I am impressed to ask this question to my own soul, "what will God do to my posterity for my sake?" Will it be good or will it be evil brought upon them for my sake?

Ah, church of the Lord, what blessings has the Lord graciously bestowed upon you because of the

faithfulness of one member, or one family, or the pastor, or Sunday school teacher, or a deacon? What of the house of Stephanas who addicted themselves to the ministry (I Cor. 16:15-16)? Are there any Stephanas houses in your church? And for their sake, the Lord is doing unto your church because of them? And what of Antipas who was the Lord's faithful martyr? Do you not suppose that there are those faithful to the Lord in your local church whom the Lord does for their sakes?

Take a minute and examine that man for whom the Lord did bless for David's sake: Abijam. We are told that Abijam walked in the sins of his father; that his heart was not perfect with the Lord (I Kings 15:3). Behold, oh sinner is this not a description of thee and of me? Are we not found walking in those sins of our carnal nature of which we have received of our fathers? Is not our heart **"desperately wicked"** (Jer. 17:9)? **"Nevertheless,"** notice that word "nevertheless." 'Tis a glorious word meaning "without preventing it." Ah, beloved, Abijam's evil ways did not prevent the Lord from blessing him because it was done for another's sake. Abijam had not earned any of this. Yet, it was done: **"Nevertheless for David's sake did the LORD his God give him..."** (I Kings 15:4).

Does the Lord not bless us as well? Why? Not because God "winks at some sins," but rather for another's sake. That word "sake" means "on account of." Beloved, it was done on account of Christ

Jesus! Oh soul, what marvelous things the Lord has done for you for Christ's sake. **"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"** (Eph. 4:32).

Now, why was this done for David's sake? **"Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life..."** (I Kings 15:5). Can your soul say that this is true of you? No, I cannot. All of self that I can boast of is **"filthy rags"** (Isa. 64:6). But there is another who has done **"right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life."** And it is for His sake that the Lord has given unto me oh so many things, chief of which is the forgiveness of my sins and my sinful nature. Take thought, dear soul of all that you are and yet, nevertheless, for Christ's sake, who did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded Him all the days of His life. Has the Lord God given unto you life eternal, forgiveness of sins, redemption, deliverance, justification, salvation, revival, and restoration? To the praise and glory of His grace!

(Nathaniel Hille is pastor of the Bible Baptist Church of Plant City, Florida)



## Twelve Apostles

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of him, to be sure, and must therefore needs be fulfilled. But is also written: **"he that believeth not shall be damned"** (Mark 16:16); **"he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of**

**the only begotten Son of God"** (John 3:18); **"he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him"** (John 3:36); and, **"he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son"** (I John 5:10). **"Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him"** (Ps. 2:11-12).

Which way will it be with you today? Will you be a fake follower? Will you be a disciple in name only? Will you receive the love of the truth, not just the head knowledge of the truth? Will you receive Him who is the Truth as who He is, the God and Savior of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ?

These twelve names are not given to us merely to memorize. They serve as witnesses, examples, and patterns unto us. They all but the traitor, who went to his own awful place, left all and followed Jesus. They loved not their lives even to the death. Their testimony lives on and teaches us today. A crown of righteousness awaits them, as it does all who love Christ's appearing. They blazed the trail for us to follow, and their surrendered lives to the will of God testify to us that the way to life eternal is the way of faith and not sight. Let us walk by the same rule and mind the same things. Let us love who they loved. **"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema [accursed] Maranatha [the Lord cometh]"** (I Cor. 16:22).

(Timothy J. Hille is pastor of the Pleasant Plains Baptist Church of Pleasant Plains, Illinois)



# Christian Life

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patience, persecutions which had come to him in his journeyings as an apostle and missionary. Then he adds a meaningful statement. **"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecutions. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived"** (II Tim. 3:12-13). That is what we must expect if we will **"live godly in Christ Jesus."**

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE MAY BRING PERSECUTION. But Jesus said, **"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you"** (Matt. 5:10-12). According to reports there are missionaries who suffer persecution for Christ's sake and the Gospel. The Apostle Paul declares that anyone who **"will live godly in Christ Jesus"** will suffer persecution. If all of the Lord's people really lived consistent Christian lives they would experience much more persecution in their communities and even in their churches. Jesus said, **"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you"** (John 15:18-19). If professing Christians were not so often conformed to the world and could let their light so shine, they would experience

far more hatred from the people of the world and from merely nominal Christianity. It is so necessary that Christianity of the present realize what James writes.

**"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God"** (James 4:4). We must not forget that the world is against Christ whom we profess to love. But if we do as the world does our profession is not true. Paul writes a warning word. **"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."** Are we seeking to be conformed to this present evil world or are we endeavoring to live transformed lives? The Christian life is a godly, transformed life.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE MAY INVOLVE POVERTY. When our Saviour was on earth, in spite of His poverty, some were superficially attracted to Him and said, **"Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest."** I do not believe we have a single instance where Jesus urged or even encouraged anyone to follow Him who came of his own accord like this man. He seemed to give him a very discouraging answer. Jesus said, **"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head"** (Matt. 8:20). Our Saviour knows that those who lightly undertake the Christian life, have not really experienced a change of heart, and cannot and will not endure. When Jesus sent out the twelve two and two He said, **"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to**

**the end shall be saved"** (Matt. 10:22). Jesus reserves His right to choose His followers. This is His prerogative. He said to His disciples, **"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you"** (John 15:16). Are we as followers of Christ anxious to give and do all we can or are we thinking of an easy life and getting all we can?

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE INVOLVES SELF-DENIAL. Christ alone suffered for man's sin and made a complete atonement. But all who have part in the atonement provided by our blessed Redeemer, are afterward to become His followers. When Jesus had made known to His disciples how He must suffer, die and rise again the third day, He also instructed them, **"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it"** (Matt. 16:24-25). There seem to be thousands who profess Christianity but show no desire to deny self, nor to take up their cross to follow. It must be they have not been "born again." And it must be they do not belong to Christ. **"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts"** (Gal. 5:24). Do we profess Christianity, while we walk after the flesh? **"But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh"** (Gal. 5:15-16).

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE INVOLVES TRIBULATION. Jesus said, **"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"** (John 16:33). Tribulation means "severe affliction; deep sorrow; acute trial." Many of the Lord's people are enduring tribulation. Of truly justified persons we read, **"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience; hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us"** (Rom. 5:3-5). But we shall not **"glory in tribulations also,"** which is a part of "the Christian life," as long as we are lovers of pleasures more than **"lovers of God,"** or like so many others **"lovers of their own selves."**

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS CONNECTED WITH SUFFERING. Of the Apostle Paul we read, **"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake"** (Acts 9:15-16). It was not that he was to be an isolated instance of suffering. It is to be so with all God's children. **"The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together"** (Rom. 8:16-17). Suffering for Christ's sake and the Gospel is

♦ (Continued on page 7)



# Small Drops

By Joseph M. Sidders of  
Temperance, Michigan

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God" (Deuteronomy 32:2-3).



## SING A NEW SONG

My oldest daughter is the songbird of our household. Daily we hear her all over the house making up songs and singing them to her heart's content. They do not always make sense, and we can almost never sing along, yet it is a wonder to hear this eight-year-old sing her soul out loud before the world. I find myself, at times, just quietly listening as her song is as a confession of what is going on in her heart.

Such should be the song of every believer as we have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. In Psalm 40, a psalm of David, he writes of an overwhelming joy as his cries to the Lord had been heard and answered. The answer to his plea was a new birth, or a new beginning, as he was lifted from his dire circumstance and placed on a solid foundation: Psalms 40:1-3 says, **"I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."**

An old preacher once said that 'when given new mercies we receive a new song.' We find in this text that not only was David's cry heard and answered, but he was filled with a new song. A song that was not buried beneath shame and embarrassment, but

rather it was already in his mouth to be confessed. The Scripture goes on to say **"many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."** His song was his testimony or his witness to the miracles of God.

My daughter probably has more to complain about than anyone in our family. She has many food allergies as well as a few other medical concerns that will likely stay with her most of her life, yet in her song I do not hear sadness or depression or grief. Her song is hope, joy and thanksgiving. Even in her darkest hours and deepest valleys she oozes such an unconditional joy. This is how we should be, dear reader, if we know the Lord as our Savior.

Our circumstance does not dictate the amount of joy we should have in our hearts. If we are born again, we have a new song, one of victory over sin. A song of redemption, that if sung loud enough before the world, will be seen by many. I pray He will equip this writer to sing His praise loudly. To God be the glory.

## PERCEIVED EXPECTATIONS

My bedroom was just outside the area of our house that contained our water softener when I was a child. This unit would run through its cycles at night letting out a sequence of high-pitched sounds. Not a big deal because everyone is typically sleeping at night, right? The influence that a sound like this would have on

an eight-year-old might surprise you. I can recall countless nights when this screeching pitch would find its way into a dream that was already in progress, thus causing for me to jerk awake in a panic as my adolescent mind perceived the noise to be a screaming woman or monster. My desk sat against the head of my bed, and I spent a lot of mornings icing my forehead from the bumps and bruises sustained during reactive jolts through the night.

Perception has a very real influence on us in today's age of instant gratification and connectivity. We are constantly on display, for better or for worse. It is easy for folks to characterize us by how we "seem" to be. Occasional bad days aside, how do you seem?

Through Jesus, those who are born again have been given the victory over even death, according to I Corinthians 15:57. Why, then, do so many of us seem sad and discouraged, hiding the hope we have in Christ from those who need it most? We walk around at times as though we have rammed our heads into our desks as a reactive jolt to things happening in the world, secretly glad to now have an excuse to hide behind our ice packs.

Jesus, in His sermon on the mount, gave great caution to his followers over falling into a place where they might be considered salt that had "lost its savour." What good would salt be if it failed to season the food you poured it on?

Jesus followed this up with His great charge to Christians today. Matthew 5:14-16 explains, **"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick;**

**and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."**

We have been called to live differently; we are to "redeem the time" and love others as He has loved us. Why would we hide that? **"A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid,"** and a sinner saved by grace should not be either! Let us not allow for this world to have the wrong perceived expectations of what a life of victory is really like.

(Joseph Sidders is pastor of the Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Temperance, Michigan)



## Christian Life

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not counted a hardship by those who are earnest surrendered Christians. When Peter and other Apostles had been beaten and forbidden to preach in the name of Jesus they let them go. **"And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ"** (Acts 5:40-42). To the Philippians Paul wrote, **"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me"** (Phil. 1:29-30).

*"Must Jesus bear the cross alone,  
And all the world go free?  
NO: there's a cross for every one,  
And there's a cross for me."*

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE  
REQUIRES SEPARATION.

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# Christian Life

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When I was asked, many years ago, whether it would be wise for a church group to separate from modernism in doctrine I tried to make it plain that it is not sufficient for Christians to separate from modernism, but also from worldliness, immorality, and carnality. To pretend to **"earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"** and at the same time love the world and the things that are in the world, is not the Christian life. **"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"** (I John 2:15). Separation must be in two directions. A Christian must be separated unto God and the spiritual, and be spiritually minded and he must be separated from the things in the world and that are carnal. When the Thessalonian people had heard the preaching they **"turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven"** (I Thess. 1:9-10). There are so many professing Christians who are not willing to separate themselves from worldly lusts. But the Lord is beseeching, **"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty"** (II Cor. 6:17-18). Dear brethren, let us give up the world with its fun, its games, its organized competitive sports, its liquor, its tobacco, its theatres and its dances and other things which interfere with the Lord's people being **"filled with the Spirit."** If we are Christians

let us live truly Christian lives.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE REQUIRES OUR TESTIMONY AGAINST THE WORLD THAT THE WORKS THEREOF ARE EVIL. A truly separated Christian life is in itself one of the strongest testimonies against all that is evil. There was a time when Jesus' own brethren did not believe on Him. But they tried to advise Him. **"Then said Jesus unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil"** (John 7:6-7).

**"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God"** (John 3:19-21).

I have a deep yearning that all the Lord's people should be at their very best, and all the more so because the world is becoming worse and our Lord's coming cannot be very far away. I feel I have much more to say. There are many others whose testimony we desire and need. I say from a heart of love, God bless you all.



## Historic Baptists

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baptized those who were converted to our faith. However, we never acknowledged that name, because we did not consider that we baptized the second time. Rather we baptized for the first time in a correct, biblical way. In the course of time the prefix "ana" was dropped

and we remained known as "Baptists" (baptizers).

Our historic development is different than that of the traditional Churches. We did not come out of the Protestant Reformation, nor from the Roman Church, nor from the Greek. We did not identify with any of these churches and we are not like them. Sir Isaac Newton, the great man of science, stated that he was convinced that the Baptists are the only Christians "that have never symbolized with Rome." Looking back in history, we take this statement as a great compliment.

Being unjustly called "heretics" (Mircea Eliade, the great historian of religion, said, "the first Christian forms were closer to those who were classed later on as heretical"), our forefathers were severely persecuted by both the ecclesiastic and secular authorities. Many paid with their own lives for what was thought to be the ultimate guilt, that of believing and practicing in their everyday lives the principles of the New Testament and of asking for freedom for all people to serve God according to the dictates of their conscience. Even though millions were martyred for their faith, in turn they never persecuted any other person. Nobody suffered persecution at the hand of the Baptists and not even one drop of blood was spilled in the name of our religion!

The characteristics by which our churches can be identified today, as well as in any given time of Christian history, are the following:

1. According to the biblical definition, the church is the assembly of baptized believers in a given place – an organization centered on spiritual activities, whose Founder, Head and Lawgiver is the Savior Jesus Christ.

The church is not a building and is not formed only of the clergy. We do not believe in concepts like national or universal Church, these being in contradiction with the Scriptures.

2. Members of a church can be only persons who believed the Gospel and whose lives have been visibly changed. To believe the Gospel means to believe that man deserves death for his sins, and can be saved only by God, by grace (that is, without deserving salvation) because of the fact that Christ suffered the punishment for his sins. We believe that man cannot save himself by his works and cannot possibly cause God to be favorable toward him. Man is totally dependent on God's mercy.

3. The way to enter the church is by baptism (performed only by immersion) based on the personal testimony of each candidate. From that moment follows obedience and faithfulness toward all the teachings of the New Testament.

4. The church has only two ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper. These are symbolic. Nothing miraculous happens during these ceremonies. They commemorate the death and the resurrection of the Lord and show our identification with Him. These are not saving sacraments; therefore, participation in them does not assure anyone's salvation.

5. The laws and ordinances upon which the church functions are found exclusively in the New Testament (even though we believe that the whole Bible is the Word of God). The church is a New Testament institution. Therefore, we do not accept other standards, viz. Old Testament Jewish forms and practices, Church tradition, teachings of a modern prophet, etc.

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# Narrow Paths

By Doug Newell IV of  
Clendenin, West Virginia

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14)

## SON OF DAVID

In Matthew 22:42-46, Jesus asked the Pharisees, **"What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions."**

That is a good question. What do you think of Christ? I want you to answer that question. Do you think little of Him? Do you dislike Jesus? Do you love Jesus? Do you even know Him? Jesus asks the all-important question and the answer concerns the destiny of your soul. The Jewish leaders tried to entrap the Lord with questions designed to prove He was either a false teacher or to get Him arrested. They utterly failed. Jesus showed Himself to be the impeccable Christ and defeated His enemies. Now it is His turn to ask the questions.

When Jesus asked, **"What think ye of Christ, whose son is he?"** They answered, **"the son of David."** How is that considering Psalm 110:1? David had no one on earth above him. He was king, and only God was higher. Even in his death, no earthly king surpassed him. David was the standard by which all the kings were judged. A good king was said to walk after David.

Every king of Judah after him was an heir. These men followed David, sat on David's throne, walked in David's ways, were called the sons of David, ruling in the city of David (I Kings 2:12; II Kings 22:2; II Chronicles 24:16). The kings of Judah were all sovereigns, but still walked in David's shadow. How is it then, David called his heir, his son, Lord? **"The LORD said unto my Lord"** (Ps. 110:1). Jesus said, David, moved by the Holy Spirit, spoke the inspired Word of God, called one of his heirs **"my Lord."** The only way that is possible, is if the LORD was his Lord. The Messiah is the son of David, but is also David's Lord because the Christ is both the son of David, and the son of God. He is truly man, and truly God.

The Pharisees had no answer, realized they were defeated, and left with no more questions. The best of the best thought about what Jesus said, and could not, rather they would not answer Him. Their only option was to either say the inspired word of Psalm 110 was not true or admit that Jesus was correct. And, to confess Jesus right, they must bow, trust in Him as their Saviour, Lord, and Christ. But, they did not answer Him and walked away. I hope you do not act like the Pharisees and read the truth of who Christ is and then walk away, heart hardened, not repenting and trusting in Him.

## THE QUIET LAMB

**"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his**

**mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth"** (Isa. 53:7).

It is natural for a man, when he is wronged, to stand up and defend himself. When he is slandered or lied about to want to set the record straight. When his life and liberty is on the line, he fights for his rights and for justice for himself. Unless he chooses to suffer. A man will stand and fight for justice, unless he has a purpose in remaining silent. And, what a glorious silence to suffer for another. Jesus was brought up on false charges, railroaded in a miscarriage of justice. Betrayed by friend and countrymen, mocked by religious leaders, and derided by wicked men. Christ Jesus must die because He came to suffer death as the substitute, to be the satisfaction for our sins. He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8). Despising the shame, but enduring the shame for His friends. For His people. For sinners He came to save.

Jesus was led as a lamb to the slaughter. Imagine the Passover. All over Israel, in every home, the father of the household would go to his flock and look for a lamb without spot or blemish. He would pass by the sickly sheep and lame until his eye came to his best lamb. The unsuspecting animal would follow the father, obediently, wherever he was led. The sheep did not fight, nor cry, nor object, but faithfully went to his slaughter. On this particular Passover season, the Lamb of God was brought to His own death. In the first Passover, the lamb's blood was shed and when God's wrath came through Egypt, every place where the blood was shed, the wrath of God passed. The lamb

died so those in the house would not. Jesus, the Lamb of God, went to the cross as our substitute. He died in the place of His people. As a lamb, mute as he came to the shearers, Jesus opened not His mouth, completely aware of what He faced as our sin bearer, and quiet in the face of His sacrifice.

The Lamb of God **"committed himself to him that judgeth righteously"** (I Peter 2:23). Christ is both our Saviour and our example. We see the meekness and the manliness of our Lord when He was **"reviled, reviled not again"** (I Peter 2:23). but for the joy set before Him, endured this greatest injustice, and the greatest suffering, for the glory of God and the salvation of His people. Marvel at this silence and glory in Christ's sacrifice. And if you know Christ, imitate Him. How foolish and wicked is the pride of life, when we must fight for every inch of everything we can get our hands on. How wicked church disputes over trivial matters, when we are followers of the Lamb of God.

(Doug Newell IV is pastor of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Wake Forest, North Carolina)



# Historic Baptists

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6. There is no hierarchy or clergy in the church. The church has only two sorts of servants. Pastors, who are also called bishops and elders in the Scriptures. They have responsibility for the teaching and spiritual growth of believers; and deacons, who take care of the natural duties of the church.

7. The church functions as a pure democracy. Every member is actively involved in the life of the church and the decisions are made by the vote of the majority. There are no differences between members, all being equal. We do not have boards, committees or other ruling bodies.

8. The churches – local assemblies – are independent one from another in the exercise of their laws and discipline, but cooperate one with another as equals in different activities. No church has authority over another one. The association of churches in different supra-church structures is unbiblical and harmful to local churches.

9. We believe in the absolute separation between church and state. We pay authorities what we owe them, as citizens of the state in which we live. We do not demand concessions from the government. We believe that the expenses of each church are not public expenses, but must be supported by the members of that church.

10. We believe and maintain that every man has the right to religious freedom. Nobody has the right to impose a religion by force, because every person is responsible before God for what he believes and for the way he lives his life.

These ten characteristics make us differ from many churches that

are still called “Baptist,” but they represent the doctrinal and practical skeleton by which a Baptist church, can be recognized, whatever name it bore or historic period in which it existed. Since all these principles are found in the Scriptures, we consider them all to be essential characteristics without which a church cannot be an authentic church of Christ.

A few other characteristics are worth noticing:

We believe that the only intermediary between God and men is Jesus Christ. Through Him we have free access to God, without needing the intercession of priests or saints.

Our churches do not have holy days. What most people consider to be Christian holy days are actually Jewish rituals, but even more often old pagan celebrations to which were given Christian names. From these pagan celebrations the practices and sometimes even the dates were kept. The celebration of Christmas, for example, is also called the celebration of the Lord’s Nativity. But the Scriptures do not give an exact date of His birth, but only the approximate period (end of September, beginning of October). If we try to find in history the origin of the date and practices of Christmas we shall find them as coming from paganism. Moreover, the Bible does not tell us that we must celebrate His birth. These are sufficient reasons for us not to be involved in such holy days. For the Christian, every day lived in obedience to God is a day of celebration, of rest for the soul.

We believe that the purpose of the church is not that of granting salvation to men. The principle “there is no salvation outside the church” is unbiblical. God is the one who saves souls, not men. Men cannot save themselves and

cannot save anyone else, whoever they might be and whatever they might do. The purpose of the church is that of representing Christ and His message before the rest of the world and of helping the spiritual growth of believers. An authentic church is the place where God accepts the worship and the service of believers.

Baptists always promoted the increase of knowledge and education among men. The concept of blind faith is foreign to us. We do not have lists of forbidden books, secular or religious, and we encourage true science. The Bible does not encourage narrowness and ignorance. The saying “believe and search not” is not biblical, as many believe. The Bible states the contrary: **“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good”** (1 Thess. 5:21). This is our principle.

We are not part of the ecumenical movement (the movement of unification of churches) because, unfortunately, they do not return to truth, or to the spirituality of original Christianity, or to the teachings and practices of the New Testament. On the contrary, these are continually ignored. The doctrinal basis of ecumenism is the decrees of the first ecumenical councils.

We are different and separated from Baptist churches that are involved directly or indirectly, through the representatives of their ruling bodies, in the ecumenical movement or have given up some of the fundamental Baptist principles.

Our purpose is not the conversion of the world or a certain nation to one ideology. We do not use marketing strategies for development and do not seek financial success or advantages. What we hope to accomplish, and that we shall do, if the Lord wills, is to present the Gospel of Christ to

as many people as we can and to persuade them to read the Holy Scriptures because there is found the way to eternal life. The rest depends on God.



## Christ The Live

(Continued from page 1) ♦

**fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me”** (Isa. 6:1-8).

As we study the pictures of our Lord in the Old Testament, this is a wonderful picture of the power of our Saviour to reconcile us to our God. If you will notice in verse four, the throne room of God is filled with smoke. I think as we progress further in our study, we will be able to understand that the scene in which Isaiah finds himself is a very unusual one. Normally the throne room of God is filled with the many created beings that cry out holy, holy, holy and twenty-four hours a day, three hundred sixty-five days a year, spending

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# Christ The Live

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all of their energies praising the Sovereign of the universe. You can verify this in Revelation 4:8, **“And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.”**

The scene Isaiah is privy to, is specially presented for his (and our) benefit. He sees a mighty omnipotent, holy and righteous Divinity on His throne. Very properly, Isaiah, the mere mortal, is awed, floored and troubled before such an awesome display. But why is it filled with smoke? I had never thought of this before, but it is very important to our picture. Because the instrument making the smoke is the altar in God's throne room. And when does the brazen altar in the tabernacle or temple make smoke? When there is a burnt offering for sin.

## 1. AND THE HOUSE WAS FILLED WITH SMOKE

Smoke in the Bible nearly always represents the wrath of God. The very first mention of smoke is the results of the wrath of God being poured out upon the cities of the Jordan plains—Sodom and Gomorrah. Thereafter, similar uses of the word are exhibited: **“But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away”** (Ps. 37:20).

But I would like for the beloved reader to pay close attention to the following passage of smoky judgment. Notice that the wrath is poured without mixture, or in other words, at full dosage and strength. **“And the third angel**

**followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name”** (Rev. 14:9-11). Hell is certainly the ultimate picture of God's judgment. Every burnt sacrifice upon the Jewish altars of old were pictures of the fiery wrath that was to come. Every time the atonement was expiated upon the altar, it was because the judgment of God had been appeased in picture through the fire and smoke of the sacrifice. The wages of sin is death, and the second death comes through the eternal burning in everlasting judgment of Hell.

So what does this have to do with Isaiah's visit to the throne room of God? He was witness to a judgment! The **“house was filled with smoke”** and God was pouring out His wrath without mixture upon sin. What was this judgment? It is Calvary! That is the picture!

**“And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me”** (Mark 15:33-34)? This is the critical time upon the cross of

Calvary when **“...it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief...”** (Isa. 53:10). This is the symbolic purpose of the three hours of darkness when **“...he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”** (II Cor. 5:21).

Our Lord Jesus Christ literally became our sin. He literally was prostrated upon the altar of God's judgment. It is not some symbolic reference. It is not some pretty storyline of logic that must merely be paid lip service to. God's justice required the smoke of a real fire consuming a real sacrifice to appease the real penalty of sin. And our glorious Lamb literally was that sacrifice. That is what Isaiah was witness to, the spiritual propitiation of the work of Calvary's cross and Lamb. The mingled picture of the three hours of darkness at earth-shaken Calvary and the smoke-filled house and shaking posts of God's throne room.

How exposed Isaiah felt. **“Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts”** (Isa. 6:5). How empty and vile for a mortal to incomprehensibly witness the greatest sacrifice in history. How completely futile to express our wonder at the expense and horror of the cost.

But the Lord is not finished with Isaiah, yet. He has another picture to show him. **“Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar”** (Isa. 6:6). The live coal. It is taken from the altar of God's judgment. It has been exposed to the unmitigated wrath of the Holy One. It is the

source of the smoke now filling the room—the darkness that filled the entire earth on that day at Golgotha's hill.

It is our Saviour! The Lord Jesus Christ! Look at the effect it has upon the person of Isaiah. **“And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged”** (Isa. 6:7). Two results: 1) our iniquity is taken away and 2) our sin purged. What does this mean?

## OUR INIQUITY IS TAKEN AWAY

**“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”** (I John 2:2). Propitiation means payment in full. This is the precious doctrine of the reconciling atonement. Jesus Christ was the live coal, and literally, He was the payment in full for our sins and our iniquity is taken away. He did not make the payment, He was the payment. The act of at-one-ment is exactly that, it reconciles us at-one with the Judge. **“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness”** (Isa. 59:2-3).

Before reconciliation can occur, before salvation can be accomplished, the first thing that must happen is the iniquity must be taken away by the Live Coal. The propitiation of the penalty must be secured. The holy Judge is unable to countenance sin of any sort. **“Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that**

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## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. When did Baptist churches start licensing a man to preach, and what Scriptures do Baptists used to prove it is necessary?

Matthew Stepp  
286 Big Creek Road  
Wayne, WV 25570

Pastor  
Big Creek  
Baptist Church  
286 Big Creek Road  
Wayne, WV 25570



**“Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection” (Acts 1:22). Titus 1:5- “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee” (Titus 1:5).**

License, as a verb is defined as “permit the use of something; allow or authorize an activity.” Typically, when a man makes known to a church that the Lord has called him to preach, the church will question him, and if satisfied, they will license him to preach the gospel. That particular Baptist church thereby permits and authorizes him to preach in their assembly and others, as the Lord may lead. The “rookie” preacher is under their careful leadership and zealous guidance, and depending on the circumstances, it will Lord willing, eventually lead to a full ordination unto the gospel ministry, which is usually accompanied by the “laying on of hands” by other ordained men of God. Selah! Think about it!

The Bible is specifically clear, that before a man should be ordained into a position of

authority (whether pastor, deacon or missionary) in the churches, he should be proved, in doctrine, Christian character, holiness and ability. The qualifications found in I Timothy 3 are not mere guidelines, but standards that churches need to be particular about, before ordaining (setting apart) their church leaders. **“Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed” (Acts 14:22-23).** The period of time when a preacher is licensed is a crucial time of learning for the minister-to-be. **“Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure” (I Tim. 5:22).**

Jesus Christ, as Head and Founder of the New Testament Baptist churches, set the example in “calling” Peter, Andrew, James and John to the gospel ministry in Mark 1:16-20: **“Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him. And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their**

**nets. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.”** And after an appropriate time of approbation, He ordained them Himself two chapters later in Mark 3:13-14: **“And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.”**

Just like all of God’s commandments and also His order in families, churches, and government, it all comes together logically and prudently. Just because the word “license” is or is not used, we will be able to find our Baptist rule of practice in Scripture! **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (II Tim. 3:16-17).** The Bible is literally our Baptist creed book, that we look to in ALL matters of faith and order. Particularly sacred is the pillar and ground of the truth (each local Baptist church) wherein lies the responsibility to continually uphold the faith once delivered. **“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (I Tim. 3:15).**

Baptist churches MUST seek to continually act in accordance to the New Testament specifications laid out in precept, principle and practice in the Holy Bible. The obvious practice of setting aside a time for “young” preachers

to learn and grow, before dumping on them the mature responsibilities of an ordained man of God is Scripture-trying and true! **“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery” (I Tim. 4:14).** **“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you...” (John 15:16).** Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP

Roger Reed  
20 Ledgewood Dr.  
Mansfield, Ohio 44905

Missionary of  
West Jefferson  
Missionary Baptist  
Mission  
90 E. Main St.  
West Jefferson, Ohio  
43162



Other than I do not know, I will try and give what I think is the answer to this question. I can relate two verses of Scripture to answer this question. The first one is found in Ephesians 4:11-12: **“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”**

But the Scripture that comes to me first for this answer would be Acts 15:22: **“Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren.”** Now it does not use the word “licensing,” but I would have to say that by the churches approval in sending these men out, it is one in the same.

And to answer the second part of the question, “what Scriptures do

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# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Could you please explain Ephesian 6:10 where it says **“be strong in the Lord.”**

Tom Ross  
6339 County Rd. 15  
South Point, OH  
45680

Pastor  
Mt. Pleasant  
Baptist Church  
6939 County Rd. 15  
Chesapeake, OH  
45619



This verse begins the concluding admonitions to the saints at Ephesus as evidenced by the word **“Finally.”** It is addressed to the **“brethren,”** those who have been knit together in God’s family by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit and the redeeming blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. As such it can have application to saved brethren within the family of God at any given time. Those who have been saved by sovereign grace, born of the Spirit, and washed in the blood of the Lamb should be considered brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“Be strong in the Lord”** is an exhortation aimed at making the believer realize where his spiritual strength and fruitfulness comes from. Jesus made it clear that we are incapable of accomplishing anything in the spiritual realm apart from His abiding power and grace: **“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing”** (John 15:4-5). All spiritual fruit, strength, and ability comes from our inseparable union with

Jesus Christ **“who is our life”** (Col. 3:4). It is Jesus who has already put away our sin by the sacrifice of Himself, imputed to us His spotless righteousness, and imparted to us the spiritual indwelling of the person of the Holy Spirit. As a result we are more than conquerors through His power and might. I John 5:4-5 declares: **“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.”** Thus, we are justified by faith which is a legal position that will never be altered. We are being sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit and the washing of the water of the Word of God. One day, due to the immutable purpose of God to which we have been predestinated, we will be glorified, bearing the image of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:28-33). Thus, we must daily acknowledge that our strength comes only from the Lord! It is God who works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). As we depend upon Him and trust Him daily we can say with holy confidence **“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”** (Phil. 4:13).

We need Christ’s strength, power, and might to stand against the wiles of the devil and the wickedness of the world. Each day, depending upon the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we must put on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:13-18) as we engage in

spiritual battle with the forces of evil. Our power to stand is not found in our ability or ingenuity. We can only stand with Christ’s imputed righteousness, the Spirit’s imparted righteousness, the secure hope of salvation, and the truth once delivered. We are called to be found faithfully marching and advancing by preaching the Gospel to every creature, using the shield of faith to quench the fiery darts of the wicked, and skillfully wielding the Word of God as our only offensive weapon. Each day our spiritual battles must be met with complete dependence upon God, praying and offering up supplication for one another. Dear brethren, the battle is great, but our Lord is greater! Let us take heart and trust in His mighty power every day! May God give us grace to say with Joshua of old: **“...But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD”** (Josh. 24:15). With renewed spiritual vigor let us cheerfully and daily obey I Corinthians 15:58: **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”**

TOM ROSS

Matthew Stepp  
286 Big Creek Road  
Wayne, WV 25570

Pastor  
Big Creek  
Baptist Church  
286 Big Creek Road  
Wayne, WV 25570



**“But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ”** (Acts 9:22). The Greek word translated “increased...in strength” is “endunamoo.” It means

to “empower” and its root word is the familiar “dunamis,” which is one of two words often translated power in the New Testament. “Exousia” speaks of authority (in the Great Commission), sovereignty and permission, whereas our word “dunamis” (dynamite! in the English!) has more to do with “raw power” and ability. It is the classic “may” vs “can” in the English classroom. One gives permission, and the other denotes ability. Selah! Think about it!

**“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”** (Phil. 4:13). It describes a process that Christians go through. The dynamite power of Christ can increase our strength exponentially as we take on the world. **“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled (endunamoo) me...”** (I Tim. 1:12). I like how the translators have shown the depth of this word, that empowers and enables God’s people to stand and advance the cause of Christ. The process of empowering comes from the Lord, as we see in Ephesians 6:10: **“Finally, my brethren, be strong (endunamoo) in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”** So, as the Apostle Paul is about to garb the Ephesus Baptist church with the armour of the Lord, he again uses this “endunamoo” to power up the members. In Wayne County terms, he is adding dynamite to their ability **“in the Lord, and in the power of His might!”**

He is going to be there for us with all the extra grace we need. Many times that necessary grace is boldness or zeal. Sometimes it is love or compassion that we need. But as the trials and attacks of the world begin to weigh on us, as it did the Apostle Paul, frequently the grace we need is raw dynamite

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# Forum #1

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Baptist use to prove it is necessary” I have to answer once again, I do not know, but I would offer up this Scripture for the reason I believe it is necessary. **“Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil”** (I Tim. 3:7).

We have to know what the man believes before we can send him out to preach in other churches. **“Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil”** (I Tim. 3:6). There should be some clear direction of the man the church sends out so none are shocked at his doctrine. I am afraid this has happened too much lately. No man wants to hear the words, “you are not ready,” but it must be done regardless of how harsh that sounds!

I have in my thirty years seen too many people hurt and churches destroyed because not enough care was taken in knowing what some men believed before they were ordained. To mention in brief, not enough care is taken either in the ordaining of Baptist preachers today because those on the “presbytery” are too afraid of offending someone with their questions. As a result, they were not ready and should have taken more time in study before they were ordained, but that is my opinion.

I have four Baptist manuals and three of them have a copyright in the early sixties, so they have been around for a while and the other one was written around 1941. They were recommended to me by my elder preachers. Only two of the manuals address licensing men that feel they have been called to the ministry by the Lord,

I would like to quote from those two.

The first one is *The Pastor Manual* by J.R. Hobbs, and I quote, “The chief officer of the church is the pastor. He is a man called of God to preach the gospel, who has first been licensed or liberated by his church to preach, who, after he has proved gifts as a preacher, has been ordained by his church to the ministry and who, according to Baptist custom, has been called by the church to become its pastor. As has been said, the preacher ought to be called of God, or else he cannot hope to do the Lord’s work well. When a brother announces to his church that he feels the call to the ministry, his church may license or liberate him so that he may be free to exercise his gifts as a minister in order that he may prove his fitness therefore. A simple motion properly made and seconded by the church conference to license the brother to preach and duly adopted by the church in conference is all that is essential to licensing a brother to preach. The clerk of the church may furnish the brother with a copy of the minutes as his credential as a licentiate.”

The second manual is *The Hiscox Standard Baptist Manual* by Edward T. Hiscox, and I quote once again, “It is one of the prevailing customs of our churches to grant a license to young men believing themselves, and believed by others, to have been called to preach the gospel, but not yet prepared to enter upon the work of the ministry. This is simply an approval by the church of the course which the candidate is pursuing. It confers no rights and imparts no authority, but expresses the conviction that the bearer possesses gifts and capabilities which indicate a call

to the ministry, and a promise of usefulness in it. The giving of licenses is not universal in such cases. Theological schools sometimes require them of students entering, as an evidence that they have the approval and confidence of their churches. Churches should be very careful not to grant licenses without sufficient evidence of a divine call, and not till they have had sufficient opportunity to judge wisely in the case. And where there is good indication of a call, the church should be ready to encourage the candidate in his chosen course, offering him every possible evidence of this support.”

All though these “manuals” have offered no Scripture to back up what they state, and they are not the final authority, but it seems to have been the practice of Baptist churches for some time, but all attempts should be used by the Scriptures to show these things. I have given to the best of my knowledge and leadership of the Spirit what I believe the Word of God has given to me about this subject. I have read many other verses that may be applied to answer this question, but it would turn into an article rather than an answer.

There is one other Scripture I would offer as proof and that is Matthew 28:18-20. The Lord Jesus Christ has all authority and has given it to His true churches to preach the gospel, and we must have preachers and teachers to fulfill this commission. **“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them**

**that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things”** (Rom. 10:14-15)! The church has a huge responsibility, and they better be very careful who they send (license) out. (Matthew 16:19 KJV) **“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven”** (Matt. 16:19). God Bless!

ROGER REED

Tom Ross  
6339 County Rd. 15  
South Point, OH  
45680

Pastor  
Mt. Pleasant  
Baptist Church  
6939 County Rd. 15  
Chesapeake, OH  
45619



I am not sure when the practice was established. There is no record in Scripture of the early churches licensing a man to preach. There are no guidelines set forth by Paul in his Epistles regarding the practice. As far as I can tell, we have only examples of qualified men being ordained and set apart by the churches to serve as elders in the Gospel ministry. There are definite instructions regarding how to identify such men in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. There are also examples in the Book of Acts where elders were ordained in the churches organized during the missionary journeys of Paul (Acts 14:22-23).

Though we have no guidelines or examples in Scripture for the practice of licensing men to preach, it is fully within the rights of an independent, autonomous Baptist church to do so if it so chooses. I have only been a member of three Baptist churches in my Christian life. None of the

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## Forum #1

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churches I have been a member of ever licensed a man to preach the Gospel, at least while I was a member.

One of my all time favorite books that should be in the library of every Baptist preacher is *The Baptist Encyclopedia* by William Cathcart. Here is what he wrote regarding the practice of licensing a man to preach:

"As a Baptist church is the highest ecclesiastical authority in the denomination, or in the Sacred Book, upon whose teachings our churches are built, the church, after hearing a brother exercise his gifts as a preacher, gives him a license, not to administer baptism and the Lord's Supper, but to proclaim the blessed Gospel. This license gives him no ministerial standing, and no position beyond that of a laymen, except that it expresses the opinion of the church of which he is a member that he has qualifications for preaching the Gospel. The following form of license has been used:

To whom it may concern. The Baptist church of Blanktown sends greeting: Our beloved brother, Joshua Smith, a man of good report, undoubted piety, and sound knowledge of divine things, after exercising his ministerial gifts in private and in public to our entire satisfaction, is hereby licensed to preach the Gospel, wherever the Lord may open a door for him. We recommend him to the favor of our brethren; and we pray that the Lord may greatly bless him. Done at our regular meeting for business..." (p. 701).

TOM ROSS

## Forum #2

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strength. Lord, help us to be strong! **"Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened (endunamoo) me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion"** (II Tim. 4:17). God answers prayers by giving of His supernatural and exceptional strength. **"Quenched the violence (dunamis) of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong (endunamoo), waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens"** (Heb. 11:34). Fighting fire with fire, the writer of Hebrews recognizes that the Devil wields "violent dynamite" against the pilgrims and warriors of the Lord. But out of our own weakness, we find the Lord's dynamite even more potent and we are empowered/enabled/strengthened to valiance and victory as we turn "to flight the armies of the aliens." **"Finally, my brethren, be strong (endunamoo) in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand"** (Eph. 6:10-13).

Faith is the common source for us to receive this dynamite strength of God. **"Who against hope (Abraham) 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 Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong (endunamoo) in faith, giving glory to God"** (Rom. 4:18-20). Yep! That is what the faith chapter was all about, too. In faith, we will find the same "unstaggering" faith that Abraham exercised. Strong in faith! If we feel weak, go to the Word. Go to the source of our strength and find strong faith that will never let us down. Though it be a matter of "hope against hope," Abraham believed. Us, too, please Lord!

The eighth and last time this word is used continues the crescendo of glory to God: **"Thou therefore, my son, be strong (endunamoo) in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"** (II Tim. 2:1-2). From generation to generation, let us find our strength in the Lord, ... find our strength in strong faith, ... find our strength in strong love, ... find our strength in strong hope, and in the grace and power of our great God. Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP

Roger Reed  
20 Ledgewood Dr.  
Mansfield, Ohio 44905

Missionary of  
West Jefferson  
Missionary Baptist  
Mission  
90 E. Main St.  
West Jefferson, Ohio  
43162



**"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might"** (Eph. 6:10).

**"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"** (Phil. 4:13).

**"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus"** (II Tim. 2:1).

Comparing these three verses there is an emphasis on just one Person, the Lord Jesus Christ! So I will make an effort to comment on **"be strong in the Lord"** and hopefully explain it well enough to satisfy the questioner.

Through Christ's crucifixion and resurrection Satan's power over Christians was broken and the great war was won, forever conquering the power over sin and death.

**"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"** (I Cor. 15:55-57).

**"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"** (Heb. 2:14-15).

Therefore we sing: "Oh victory in Jesus, my Savior forever. He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood" But, in this life on earth, battles of temptation go on constantly. Therefore the Lord's power, the strength of His Spirit is what we have to have for victory over those temptations. I have no spiritual strength of my own; I must lean on Jesus and the Holy Spirit to continue to win. **"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"** (Phil. 4:13), but not of my own strength.

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## Forum #2

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I would like to quote John Gill here because he puts it so vividly: **“be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might”**; which is directed to, partly on account of the things before exhorted to, which could not be performed in their own strength; and partly with respect to their many and potent enemies hereafter mentioned, against whom they had no might nor power of their own; and therefore the apostle points out the Lord Jesus Christ unto them, in whom are strength, power, and might, even everlasting strength, to enable them to perform their duty, and to fight against every enemy, sin, Satan, and the world; for though they are weak, and strength in themselves, and can do nothing of themselves, and without Christ; yet since there is strength in him, which is communicable to them, they may expect it from him, and depend upon it; and they may come at, or strengthen themselves in it, and by it, by meditation on it, by prayer for it, by waiting on Christ in his own ways, by exercising faith upon him, and through the Spirit, who strengthens them from him with might in the inward man.”

I guess the simplest answer would be, I can not do anything without my Lord, and I have strength only because of Him. **“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing”** (John 15:5). Are you, dear reader, strong in the Lord? I hope and pray that all the elect of God would **“be strong in the Lord”** God Bless!

ROGER REED

## Christ The Live

(Continued from page 11) ♦

**deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he** (Hab. 1:13)? All evidence of guiltiness must be atoned for. **“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us”** (Ps. 103:12). Impossibly, yet divinely, Christ the Live Coal has touched our mouth and by His fiery substitution, has taken away our iniquity. He paid the debt I owed in full. Praise God!

### OUR SIN PURGED

Now of necessity, as shown above, the iniquity (plural) must be paid for. That, as we have seen, is the work of the atonement. All must be paid duly and lawfully. That is the necessity of Calvary. The iniquity was not just ignored, but propitiated. The sinner was not just forgiven, but redeemed. So what does the second part involve? What does it mean to have our sin (singular) purged?

What we have occurring in Isaiah when Jesus, the Live Coal touches his lips, is a miracle of salvation. I know that Isaiah was already saved when he saw the vision, but the picture is there for him (and us) to marvel at. Before the live coal touched him, he saw his vileness and unworthiness on display along with all of his people. He was lost and undone. But when Christ saved him by the breathtaking work of the sacrifice upon God's altar, and the coal being applied to his soul, then we have a new creature. **“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new... To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto**

**them...”** (II Cor. 5:17,19). How do we know such a work had been done to Isaiah? **“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me”** (Isa. 6:8). He now felt himself fit to be a servant. An unworthy one, yes, no doubt, but the desire and ability was now present, where only woe had been attendant before.

This then is the second work of the Live Coal. Our sin purged, or washed away. It is actually the work of the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ as the Apostle Paul tells Titus. **“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life”** (Titus 3:5-7).

Yes, the sins are atoned for, but the work of eternal life is much more potent than mere expiation, marvelous though that be. Our sin nature must be destroyed (our sin purged) and a pure, spotless, holy nature imparted. This is regeneration. Being particularly the work of the Holy Spirit, it is yet secured for us at the cross of Calvary by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. **“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus”** (Rom.

3:24-26).

### THE TRIUNITY OF THE WORK OF GOD

Now at this point I need to be careful in dissecting the work of salvation that our Redeemer has procured and secured for us. The work of salvation is the work of a triune God. Simply put from the Apostle Jude's perspective: **“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are (1) sanctified by God the Father, and (2) preserved in Jesus Christ, and (3) called: (by the Holy Spirit)”** (Jude 1:1) (-TMS). Salvation is truly a work of God. God the Father has elected a people from before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4), given them to His Son to purchase the full redemptive price of their sins (John 17:6, 9, 12), and the Holy Spirit makes the gospel call effective by the miraculous drawing of regeneration (Eph. 2:1, 5).

The reason I caution at this point is that some will try to separate the distinct works of the Godhead and try to emphasize one or the others. While others will take the opposite route to over compensate the previous error and try to compact the entire work of salvation in each aspect of God's complete work. In other words, I would like to emphasize at this point that a soul is not saved in eternity past, even though it is assured by the election, foreknowledge and ordination of God. Election is unto salvation, it is not salvation. Likewise, when the work of God the Son was completed at Calvary and He uttered the marvelous words **“It is finished...”** in John 19:30, atonement was finished. But for the innumerable multitude of those sheep yet uncalled by the power of the Holy Spirit, salvation

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# Christ The Live

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was not yet complete. Some would have you believe that God's elect are now walking around as regenerate unbelievers. No such thing!

Just as election is unto salvation, so, too, is the atonement. Eternal life and salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit, also. Regeneration and the imparting of the gifts of repentance and faith are essential to my salvation and yours. I fully believe that is what the angel with the tongs holding our live coal meant. Our iniquity is taken away (atonement) and our sin purged (regeneration).

In the eyes of God, we are saved from before the foundation of the Earth as surely as any of God's decrees are carried out. In the eyes of God, our salvation was assured at the judgment of our sins in the impeccable body of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. But for salvation to be complete, the Holy Spirit must mix faith with the gospel in the person of God's chosen sheep. **"For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it"** (Heb. 4:2). **"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"** (Rom. 10:17). And finish up with Romans 1:16, **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."**

Follow the chain of logic. Was Abraham saved? As truly as Timothy the pastor was? Yes, of course. Saved the same way? Yes, again. How? By faith, through grace. **"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto**

**him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. ... Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all"** (Rom. 4:3-5, 16).

So, if Timothy (and you and I) were saved the same way after the cross of Calvary that Abraham was saved before the cross of Calvary, the chain of logic dictates that we realize and recognize the work of the Holy Spirit. God elected Abraham and Timothy from before the foundation of the world. (Now I realize that God is omniscient and never actually had to come to a time to make a decision, but He, Himself states it this way for our understanding in Matthew 25:34, Luke 11:50, John 17:24, Ephesians 1:4, Hebrews 4:3; 9:26, I Peter 1:20, Revelation 13:8, and 17:8. Thus far, they (Abraham & Timothy) are completely identical in their relationship to God's salvation.

However, Abraham believed in the coming Messiah. The Holy Spirit regenerated Abraham's spirit and he believed in the finished work of the Saviour that needed no works from himself, only grace. Just like Noah and every other Old Testament saint, the work of the atonement had not actually (in man's eyes) been chronologically completed. The ears of the world had not yet heard the triumphant cry of the Crucified One. But Abraham's salvation was sure, complete and he had in his possession, eternal life. Yes, he did!

Now on the other hand, Timothy was not born (possibly, but you and I for sure) until after Christ died to purchase his personal salvation on the rugged cross. Timothy believed in the arrived Messiah. And just like Abraham, the Holy Spirit regenerated Timothy's spirit. Does the order make a difference to either God or the recipient of His salvation? Not at all. Why? Because God is omnipresent. He is! He is Abraham's Saviour! He is Timothy's Saviour! He is my Saviour! All of the acts of the redemptive work of God are in the present to Him, no past, no future, just present when you take the measurement of time out of the picture, as we must with an eternal, omnipresent God. **"And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? ... And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err"** (Mark 12:24, 26-27).

So we must conclude that the works of all three members of the Godhead are necessary for salvation of lost sheep. The total work of salvation is the sum of the Three. And yet the work is One. Yes, the miracle of the trinity is seen even in the flawless design of redemption.

Let us return to our peephole into the throne room of God, via the Holy Bible. We see the picture of Jesus Christ, the Son of God as the live coal, upon the burning altar of God the Father's holy judgment, being brought by the tongs of the gospel to the

healing of mankind through the divine work of God the Holy Spirit. Necessary, seamless and perfection. Now let us say with the enthusiasm of Isaiah, **"... Here am I; send me!"** May the Lord use us, this very day, for His glory and honor and may we acknowledge our triune God yet again as the Saviour, propitiation and redemption of our souls. May God bless these word pictures to the beloved reader's edification.



## Faith—Where It

(Continued from page 1) ♦

The Christian's faith is something that is remarkable and worthy of our consideration. As we consider this faith, it is important for us to consider, also, the origin of such faith. Any consideration of the origin of such faith, ought also to inspire a consideration of the Author of Christian faith.

Though faith is often spoken of, and though many definitions or examples of faith might exist in mankind; the most important faith, the highest and best faith, the only faith that exists as a result of God's providence and intervention in the salvation of the souls of men, is that faith which is revealed to us through the Holy Word of God – in particular, the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the faith that we are in consideration of. This is the faith – the faith delivered to the sons and daughters of God – that I want us to think about.

Please understand that every man needs to realize that God is the Creator, men are a part of the creation of God, and that mankind has rebelled against God. Given the present plight of the fallen race of mankind, and given the

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# Faith—Where It

(Continued from page 17) ♦

desperate need that men have of a Saviour, and given the hopeless and the helpless condition of the wretched, vile, and totally depraved members of humanity; it must be, that if there is to be a salvation (a Saviour of men), then that salvation must be on a higher and better level than any of us. That salvation must be effective on a spiritual and invisible level, as perceived by mere mortal men. If this is so, then faith, of some sort, is required in order for men to be engaged on a spiritual level, or in order for men to believe or trust, or demonstrate any sort of hope at all, in the spiritual realm, and in the life to come. Faith is that link that I am speaking about. Faith brings God to man, and man to God. Faith is necessary to bridge the gap that exists between what our mortal eyes or senses might perceive, and that which is eternal, spiritual, heavenly, and able to save our souls.

## FROM OUTSIDE OURSELVES

**“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”** (Jude 1:3).

The first thing that I want to remind each of you of, is this: The Christian’s faith is not a result of any inner goodness, any personal merit, or any individual effort. The faith that is spoken of in the Bible – the faith that is presented to us as something necessary and even essential in the salvation of sinners – is not a faith that is developed by men and women in and of themselves.

In fact, if you think about it,

any faith that is derived from within ourselves; or, any faith which is derived from amongst humanity, would only be able to deliver strength, character, hope, or confidence that is equal to the source of the faith. In the end, such faith will be found insufficient, and will certainly fail. **“Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD”** (Jer. 17:5).

The world has its own versions of faith, and these take many forms, such as: False religions, false idols, self-confidence, trust or confidence in others, optimism, humanism, and many more besides. And though self-confidence, trusting in others, having a positive nature and other demonstrations of some sort of worldly faith may all be well and good on a mortal level; still, none of these are of any use at all, when confronted with the debt that our souls owe unto God, the demands of the righteousness of God, and the condemnation that we each labor under, as a result of our sins and our defiance of God. And yet, in our natural state, we cannot attain unto proper, godly faith – such faith is absent in mankind and is not naturally occurring in humanity. The Apostle Paul said, **“And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith”** (II Thess. 3:2). John Gill said of this verse, “no man has faith of himself, it is the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit; and it is only given to the elect of God, who are ordained unto eternal life, and therefore it is called the faith of God’s elect; all mankind have it not, none but Christ’s sheep; and the reason why others have it not is because they are not of his sheep.”

So, the truth is made apparent, as we study the Word of God, and that is this: Faith effective unto salvation – the Christian’s faith – is not a work of man, nor is it a measure of the worth of man, nor is it attainable unto man in a mortal or natural sense. The faith to attain Heaven is not readily available to such men as you and I, who are only mortal, finite, and frail! Naturally speaking, we can only deal on the mortal and physical level, and saving faith is outside of our abilities or worthiness.

## FROM GOD

If saving faith does not come from within us, and yet souls are still saved; then where does that faith to believe in Jesus Christ come from? Well, the answer is found in the Word of God. **“Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent”** (John 6:29). It is necessary that a supernatural miracle – such as the salvation of a man’s soul – must have a supernatural or miraculous beginning (source). I think we do Christianity a disservice when we make faith something that is mundane, common, or easily affected. In truth, the faith necessary in the miracle of salvation is faith that only comes from God. Or, we might rather say, salvation can only be the result of faith that comes from God. No other faith will do.

During the course of His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ had this to say to those who pretended to trust in Him – those who made a pretense of faith in Jesus as the Christ and Saviour of men: **“But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he**

**said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father”** (John 6:64-65). The lack of faith from God is an obstacle that prevents men from truly knowing Jesus Christ as Saviour. It is not as if men have a right to blame God for this lack of faith; indeed, the lack of faith is a defect, or a failure, that men can only blame on themselves. **“And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters. And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation”** (Deut. 32:19-21). Our own wickedness, our own failures, our own depravity have removed from us the knowledge of God that Adam enjoyed when he was first created by God. In our current broken condition, the lack of faith in God prevents us from knowing Him – but the fault is ours, and not the One Who has made us. It is a miracle of grace, whenever God will determine to grant saving faith unto a miserable wretch like you or me! Without that grace, which precedes that heavenly faith, not one of us would ever be saved! But, because God has loved us, and because God has ordained us unto salvation, and through His grace and favor which He bestows upon us, we are granted faith to believe in Jesus Christ, and grace to repent of our sins and cast ourselves upon Him as

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# Faith—Where It

(Continued from page 18) ♦

our Saviour and Salvation.

## BRINGS CHRIST TO US

I have one more thought for us to consider, as we consider "Faith – Where it Comes From." The great gulf that separates fallen man from our Holy God is bridged through the faith that is granted unto us. I know that there is much involved in this reconciliation with God: The love of God, the grace of God, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the satisfaction of the Justice of God, the righteousness of Jesus Christ to bring us into the presence of God. However, I want to simply consider the magnificent effects of faith on the relationship that is formed between God and His children.

It is this faith which causes us to trust in the power, mercy, and grace of the Invisible God. It is this faith which gives us sight of Jesus Christ, the only One Who could bleed for our sins, endure the punishment for our transgression, Who could die in our place, and Who could rise again for our justification. Only through faith can we know and believe such wonderful truths! This is the faith that has propelled Christianity into the world-changing religion that it has been! Sadly, today, much of Christianity is apostate, and this remarkable, magnificent, and miraculous faith is absent in so many professing members of Christianity.

And yet, as we see the holy effects of Christian faith, we are confronted with the amazing spectacle of Jesus Christ being brought into our lives. We, who are nothing but sinners, are purchased by the power of Christ's blood, and we are brought into a personal, intimate relationship with God,

and His Son, Jesus Christ! We owe our knowledge of Christ, and our happy relationship with God to the faith that has been granted unto us. Consider what Paul had to say to the Ephesians: **"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen"** (Eph. 3:14-21). Christ dwells in your heart (if you are saved), by faith. You know the love of Christ (if you are saved), by the faith that God has granted unto you. We who are saved can ascend to a comprehension of holy and eternal matters – not due to any talent or wisdom that we have possessed; and not due to any inherent goodness in us; and not due to any claim we have upon God (outside of Jesus Christ) – because of the faith that we have received from God.

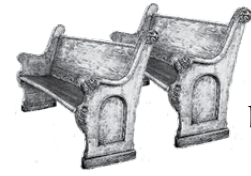
This saving faith brings Jesus Christ to us. This faith brings us to God. This faith (in the absence of mortal or physical sight or senses) makes real to us the truth that God loves us, that Jesus Christ has died for us, that there

are responsibilities and privileges granted unto to us to serve and love God in this life, and that Heaven itself awaits us who are the servants of God. Through faith we are reconciled to God. **"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister"** (Col. 1:21-23). The foundation of our trust and belief in God, is the faith which He has delivered unto us. We continue in this faith; we are further built up in this faith; we are nigh to Christ, and close to God, and near to holiness, as we nurture this faith in Jesus Christ. **"And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving"** (Col. 2:4-7).

If Heaven is our destination, faith is the grace that brings us there. You might also look at it this way: Since true saving faith comes from Heaven and God, It will also lead us to Heaven and God. There is no other place that it comes from; there is no other place it will take us unto.



## The Short Pews



Brief Articles  
by Curtis Pugh  
(1944 - 2018)

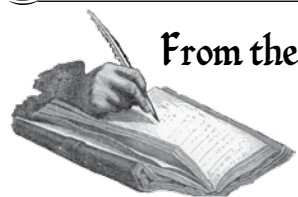
### A SIMPLE TEST

There is a simple test anyone can give to determine whether or not truth is believed and taught. It involves just one brief Bible verse. So it is not difficult for any thinking person to see for himself or herself the truthfulness of any religious teaching according to the Bible.

The verse to use is Romans 8:8 which says: **"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."** The verse immediately before this one talks about the mind of men as they are naturally. The mind of these people who are **"in the flesh"** is enmity against God. That is the way we are as natural born human beings. Everyone knows that it is not necessary to teach a child to lie and to disobey. They come by these traits naturally. The Bible says, **"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies"** (Ps. 58:3). Theologically this is called the doctrine of total depravity. Every part of every person, as they are naturally, is fallen or sinful. That does not mean that everyone is as bad as they could be, but they are as bad off as they could be.

That is where the first verse quoted above comes in: **"...they that are in the flesh cannot please God."** Even so called good deeds spring from selfish and impure motives. Those people that are **"in the flesh"** all think

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## From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell  
(1941 - 2002)



### The Two Likenesses

**“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2).**

Paul’s exhortation to the church at Rome in my text reveals that the Christian mind is impressionable. There are two forms which seek to impress themselves upon the believer. There is a likeness to the world and a likeness to God. Every Christian bears the image of both to some degree. The burden of Paul is that the Roman Christians bear the likeness of Christ.

#### THE WORLD DEFINED

The verse begins: **“And be not conformed to this world. . .”** The word **“world”** here means the ungodly world as contrasted with Christ’s disciples. It is from the Greek word (aion) which denotes “age” or “generation.” The world might best be defined as the temporary order of things in which sin predominates, to which the age to come (the millennium) is the exact opposite. Note that Paul says **“this”** world in contrast to the one which is coming under the King of kings. Paul is referring to the world order Satanically arranged and controlled. **“And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness”** (I John 5:19). This is why Satan is termed in the New Testament **“the prince of this world”** (John 14:30). The unbelieving, unchristian world population is designated **“the children of this world”** (Luke

16:8).

Literally the text may read: “Be not co-fashioned” with this world order without God. The Bible declares that **“the fashion of this world passeth away”** (I Cor. 7:31; I John 2:17). The things which pass away are fashion or likeness. Whatever is permanently abiding and always the same is not the fashion of this world. That which is fleeting and fickle is of this world. That which is permanent and unchanging is of God. **“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever”** (I John 2:17).

What makes this world is its spirit, its fashion, its pursuit, and its domination. Paul looks at the world in its moral features. Its spirit is selfishness and not love. Its fashion is temporal and not eternal. Its pursuit is the pleasing of self and not God. Its domination is from Satan and not Christ. To be conformed to this world is to be world-like, selfish, self-seeking, and without the Holy Spirit.

#### NONCONFORMISTS

All true believers in Jesus Christ must be nonconformists when it comes to this evil world. How sad to see some who profess to be Christians whose greatest ambition is to be as much like the world as possible. They warn of the extremes of Puritanism and Victorian morality. They see a great danger in being too strict and legalistic. This is all wrong.

The greatest danger is in being strictly worldly. Better to be too strict than too careless.

Almost every person who professes the gospel has his own standard of conformity to the world which modifies his interpretation of the duty here enjoined. Some think it means only the dress of the world, and therefore a duty to assume a permanent plainness, such as the Society of Friends adopts. Others say it means all intercourse with the world, and therefore enter a convent to obey this injunction. Still others see a certain fixed territory that must not be overstepped, lest we enter the realm of the world, and they take it upon themselves to decide for all others what these material and mechanical lines are.

The prohibition in my text respects those things in the world that are sinful, but it does not forbid us doing anything but what is contrary to the law of Christ. We must not take the verse to mean that there is no respects in which we may not agree with the world. If the world practices temperance, we are not to be intemperate. If they delight in courtesy, we are not to be rude. If the world views industry as a virtue, we are not to be lazy. The command concerns the evil manners of the ungodly men in the world from a moral and spiritual standpoint.

Today there is a danger of making worldliness to be the outward observance of certain iron-clad rules which men have laid down and which are not found in Scripture. Some modern-day Pharisees are so very technical about preserving what they term the outward line between the church and the world that they see no evil in conformity to the world in inward things. They seem to forget that injustice, impurity,

greed, untruthfulness, slander, and evil thoughts are worldliness. A life devoted to selfishness or pleasure, a life lacking in love and sympathy, if a worldly life! How few seem to realize this!

The fashion of this age is not to be our standard of conduct. Our standard of conduct is the perfect will of God. The chief function of a Christian is to glorify God and promote His kingdom on earth. To do God’s “good, and acceptable, and perfect” will is his “meat and drink.” In His serving and pleasing God he must not be moved by the smiles or frowns of this world. A true disciple of Christ asks not: “What will my companions say? What can I do to save myself from public criticisms? What is the prevailing etiquette?” Rather, he asks: “What would God have me to do? What will He approve of? What will be becoming to the gospel?”

The believer must not conform to the habits, style, and manners of the world. Satan has developed this present world order with its philosophy, its science, its government, its amusements, and its religion. The world’s philosophy is man’s account of all things which is ever changing. Its science eliminates the supernatural. Its government is godless and exalts man. Its amusements are adopted to blot out realities from the mind. Its religion is to soothe man’s conscience and get rid of any thought of the judgment of God. As born-again believers we must be governed by the Bible, and we are to fashion our lives after the example of Christ.

There are certain things in the world not expressly mentioned in the Word of God as either right or wrong. What do we do when a thing is not covered by any positive law in the Scripture?

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# The Two Likenesses

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In such cases we must ask the following questions: "Does this hinder my duty to my God? Will this impede my growth in grace? Is this of God, or of the world which I am to renounce?" We must not permit the world to regulate our opinions and actions. The Bible must shape our opinions and actions, and the Bible alone. We must rise above the world and sacrifice the things of the world for higher and holier things.

## THE EVILS OF WORLD CONFORMITY

First, conformity to the world is injurious to the church of God. When the Israelites began to conform to the customs and practices of the heathen nations the results were disastrous to their spiritual life. The ruin of the churches in Asia was their worldliness. Sardis had a name to live, but it was dead. Laodicea was so lukewarm and worldly that Christ departed out of her midst. In proportion as we as church members try to please the world by conformity to it, we are unfaithful to our Lord Jesus Christ and displeasing to Him. **"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God"** (Jas. 4:4).

Second, when a Christian conforms to this world it is injurious to the world. Some believers imagine they will have more influence over the world by becoming more like it. This world is never made better by lowering moral and spiritual standards. The worldly-minded Christian has no influence over the world, but the world has much influence over him. We as Christians can only

make the world better by keeping before it a high ideal of what the Christian life ought to be and, by God's help, we must try to live up to it.

Third, the Christian must be different from the world, and the world must see this difference: **"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"** (Matt. 5:16; cf. I Pet. 2:12). We dare not conform to the world's conduct and customs. To do so is to hinder the gospel of Christ among the unsaved. We are **"a light of them which are in darkness"** (Rom. 2:19). Jesus Christ said: **"If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"** (Matt. 6:23).

Fourth, conformity to the world is contrary to the doctrine of free grace. According to Scripture, the grace of God which brings salvation teaches us to deny **"ungodliness and worldly lusts"** and to live **"soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world"** (Tit. 2:12).

Fifth, world conformity leads a Christian to backslide: **"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica"** (II Tim. 4:10). Men who become entangled in the affairs of this world tend to forget that their citizenship is in Heaven. Love to this present world is often the reason why some forsake the ways of the Lord.

Sixth, when a Christian conforms to the standard and style of the world he confirms the world's view of the Christian religion. The world thinks religion is a gloomy thing, a repulsive restraint, a weary bondage, something desirable to have when death approaches, but which a person should live without

as long as possible. A worldly Christian gives encouragement to this idea because the world gets the impression from observing him that religion has little or no relation to daily life.

## LIKENESS TO GOD

My text continues: **" . . . but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."** Note the contrast: **"Be not conformed,"** but **"be ye transformed."** The two words **"conform"** and **"transform"** are widely different. The former looks to the outward mold, the latter the inward substance. Believers are not only to shun the world; they must have a different heart and way of living.

The transformation to which the Roman Christians are exhorted is not a mere external change, but one which results from an entire alternation of the state of mind: **"Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."** An external change is useless unless the mind is changed. Christianity first makes an internal change in the heart. This internal change in the heart results in an external change. The heart, or mind, is the ruling part of man (Prov. 4:23), and so when the man is renewed in his mind the whole man is renewed.

There are two renewings in the Scriptures. The first renewing of the mind is an act of the Holy Spirit in which religious life begins. **"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost"** (Tit. 3:5). In the sense that we must be acted upon by the Spirit before we can act in the spiritual realm, we are passive in this initial stage of renewing or regeneration.

But the Spirit acts upon us so as to secure our own active consent in the renewing. Then the man that has been renewed is commanded to be renewed in the spirit of his mind. This stage is one in which man is highly active. The command in my text to be like God and not like the world is this stage of the renewing, for the Roman Christians were already converted.

A thorough, inner, radical revolution of the world is required: **"Ye must be born again"** (John 3:7). It is not enough to be sober and serious in all things. It is not enough to be anxious and awakened. None of these things are necessarily the renewing of the heart. To be baptized and a member of some church is not the renewing of the mind. Simon Magus was baptized and a church member, but he went to Hell. There must be a change which begins in the individual's heart and overflows the whole life till all within and around is transformed. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: **"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"** (II Cor. 5:17). It is impossible for a person to experience such a change and to be ignorant of it. Could a slave be set free and not know it?

## THE WORTH OF LIKENESS TO GOD

Likeness to God will exclude likeness to the world. The greater desire we have to be like God, the less we shall have to be like the world. The more concern we have for the soul, the less we shall be anxious about the body. The more we think of eternity, the less we shall think of this present world. The more we think about our treasures in Heaven, the less we

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# The Two Likenesses

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shall think about our treasures on earth. The more we think about the judgment seat of Christ, the less we shall think of the judgment of men (I Cor. 4:3-5).

The model of the transformed life is Jesus Christ. He was not moulded by His age; His age was moulded by Him. The Christian must not be moulded by public opinion or what the newspapers write. We must in all things be like the Lord Jesus Christ. Like Christ, we must be in the world, but not of it. Unless we are like Christ, He will say to us: **"I never knew you"** (Matt. 7:23).

The purpose of the renewing of our minds is **"that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."** We are to prove this in our daily living as the Lord Himself did when He was on earth. We must do this because the Spirit is working in us, producing in us likeness to God, transforming us into His image, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. As we die to the world by this progressive sanctification, the world loses much of its attraction to us and duties, once thought irksome, become our sweetest delight.

## THE WHOLE LIFE IS AFFECTED

The man who has his mind renewed and continuing to be renewed in the spirit of his mind will live differently than he did before regeneration and conversion. Even his business will be affected. He will no longer regard his business dealings from a worldly standpoint. His question will not be: "Will it pay?" but: "Is it right?" The Christian view of business is to provide food and raiment for himself and

his family in passing through the world. Business to a renewed man is as holy as worship and done to glorify God.

This inward change of heart will affect our companions. The question will not be: "Are they pleasant?" but: "Are they pleasing to God?" Those companions who do not contribute to our spiritual life must generally be avoided. Friends and family must yield to Christian principle. The worldly minded must be avoided that we might escape their pollutions.

This transformation will affect our amusements. The question will not be: "Is there any harm in this?" but: "Is there any good in it?" Such questions as: "Does this amusement promote my eternal interest? Would I want to be caught doing this if Christ were to return?" must be given consideration. If a thing does not edify, it might best be left alone so that we may do more important things.

## CONCLUSION

1. This transformation is developed by being near to God. It is noteworthy that the same Greek word translated in Romans 12:2 **"transformed"** is the same word used to describe the transfiguration of Christ: **"And was transfigured before them"** (Matt. 17:2). When did Christ's transfiguration take place? When He was on the mountain top in prayer: **"And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening"** (Luke 9:29). Prayer is the true transformation of the soul!

2. The renewing of the mind commanded in my text is the consequence which follows regeneration. The renewing continues what the single act of regeneration, done once for all, started (II Cor. 4:16). The

born-again man is to put off the old man and to put on the new man (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-10). This renewal process causes the believer to pass from one glorious stage of spiritual development to another: **"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord"** (II Cor. 3:18). This process must continue until **"we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is"** (I John 3:2).

3. A Christian's creed is the Bible, the good and perfect will of God for him in this present evil world. He is not interested in what the best of men have said--be they Graves or Gill--be they Pendleton or Pink. His chief concern is to know what God has said on a matter. No commentary of preacher or priest, no word of some church or council, may supersede the Word of God. To understand the Bible, we need not a priest or preacher, not a council or commentary, but a new mind.

4. Christianity is the gospel of renewal. To enter Heaven a man must have a new covenant, a new nature, and live in newness of life, or he can never sing the new song in glory. You must be made a new creature and have a new nature, new principles, new affections, new desires, new aims, and new hopes. You must abandon your old sinful life. You must be renewed by the Spirit in your mind. You must experience a spiritual metamorphosis!

5. Do not excuse yourself from obeying the gospel by pleading inconsistencies in the lives of false professors. There are hypocrites in the churches, but that is no reason why you should be an unbeliever. Hypocrites are perishing in the church, but that is no reason why you should perish in the world.

You are answerable to God, not for hypocrites, but for yourself. There is no time to waste. You are rushing toward eternity, and eternity is rushing toward you, and your meeting place is the judgment seat of God.

**"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"** (Acts 16:31).



## The Short Pews

(Continued from page 19) ♦

they are important and that God needs or wants them or what they have to offer. So they think they can trade with God. And they think God cannot save them unless they let Him.

So here is the crux of the issue. If you want to test any teaching ask this question: does this teaching say that lost sinners can do something, and by that act please God and get Him to save them? That is what the Bible calls salvation by works as opposed to salvation by grace (free bestowal) alone. Some say "get baptized." Others say make a pilgrimage to this or that place. Someone else says take a bath in our sacred river. Still others say "make a decision for Christ," or "open your heart's door to Jesus," or "pray this magical prayer," etc. ad nauseam. The Bible says, **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"** (Eph. 2:8-9). The Bible says that those who were born again, **"...were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"** (John 1:13). In spite of the plain words of Scripture, there are many teachings that say salvation is by

♦ (Continued on page 23)

# The Short Pews

(Continued from page 22) ♦

works. Teachings that claim the sinner must birth himself anew by a personal act of his will are foreign to the Bible which says the new birth is not, **“...of the will of man.”** You have a tool whereby you can test religious teachings. Use it!

## A MAN SENT FROM GOD

One man sent by God was absolutely unique: never another like him before or after. The Bible calls that man John the Baptist. He was called a Baptist because he was a Baptist – not a sprinkler or one who poured, but a Baptist – a dipper – for that is the meaning of the word. Consider these Scriptures: **“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John”** (John 1:6). Referring to Jesus Christ as the **“Light”** the Bible says about John: **“He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light”** (John 1:8).

He came **“...to make ready a people prepared for the Lord”** (Luke 1:17). There was never another like him for it was foretold that **“...he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb”** (Luke 1:15). Think of all that means: God sovereignly filled John with the Spirit in his mother’s womb! He never needed to be born again!

In order to **“make ready a people prepared for the Lord”** he was the first to preach the Gospel. Proof: **“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”** (Matthew 3:1-2). Compare this with **“Now when Jesus had heard that John was**

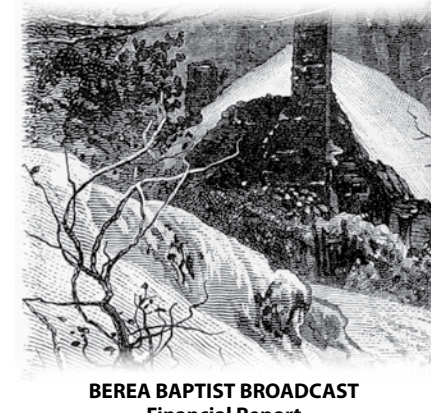
cast into prison, he departed into Galilee... From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:12, 17). John and Jesus preached the same message, but John preached it first.

Not only did John preach the Gospel: he also was sent by God to institute baptism. John said, **“...he that sent me to baptize with water...”** (John 1:33). God has never sent anyone else to begin baptism. John’s baptism is valid today! Jesus thought John’s baptism so important that He walked sixty-odd miles from the clear waters of Galilee to be baptized by John in the Jordan River. We know John dipped or plunged converts in water because that is the meaning of the word “baptizo” in the Greek. (Our words baptize, baptism, Baptist are related to this word.) Besides that we read, **“And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there...”** (I John 3:23). Only those who dip or plunge their converts in water need **“much water.”** Others may need only a little. **“Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water”** (Matt. 3:16). He had to go down into the water before He could come up **“out of the water”!** Later when Philip baptized the Ethiopian we read, **“And when they were come up out of the water...”** (Acts 8:39). They both went down into the water and both came **“up out of the water.”** Do not ignore John the Baptist, nor his message, nor his baptism since it is the only baptism God ever sent a man to begin. It is the only baptism that Jesus or His disciples had!



## BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 1-1-2019 to 1-31-2019

Beginning Balance .....	\$860.80
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL .....	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX .....	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV .....	200.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	150.00
Carol Willett, Edgewater, FL .....	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL .....	25.00
Elton Dunbar, Pelion, SC .....	25.00
Evelyn & Lia James, Aztec, NM .....	299.40
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR .....	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....	20.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK .....	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV .....	100.00
Joann Mills, Barboursville, KY .....	19.00
The Lord’s Church, Goose Creek, SC .....	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY .....	70.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH .....	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN .....	50.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR .....	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR .....	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX .....	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....	25.00
Subscriptions .....	84.00
Anonymous .....	1,220.00
Dividing checks .....	176.60
Sub Total .....	\$3,451.50
TOTAL .....	\$4,312.30
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Printing .....	490.00
Postage .....	525.19
Wages .....	2,300.00
FICA .....	175.90
Dividing checks .....	176.60
Bank Charge .....	13.00
MS Taxes (2nd Quarter) .....	99.00
Total Expenditures .....	\$3,779.69
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$532.61



## BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 1-1-2019 to 1-31-2019

Beginning Balance .....	\$1,961.34
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	225.00
Briar Creek, Williamsburg, KY .....	100.00
Calvary I. B. C., Sumas, WA .....	100.00
Calvin Smith, Tupelo, MS .....	50.00
.....	475.00
TOTAL .....	2,436.34
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Radio Time .....	403.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....	403.98
Interest .....	+ .01
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$2,032.37

## BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 2-1-2019 to 2-28-2019

Beginning Balance .....	\$532.61
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL .....	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX .....	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV .....	200.00
Bruce Allen, Fairmount, GA .....	25.00
Carol Willett, Edgewater, FL .....	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL .....	25.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR .....	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....	20.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK .....	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV .....	100.00
Landmark M. B. C., Goose Creek, SC .....	25.00
The Lord’s Church, Goose Creek, SC .....	50.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH .....	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN .....	50.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR .....	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR .....	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS .....	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX .....	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....	25.00
Subscriptions .....	0.00
Anonymous .....	2,720.00
Dividing checks .....	0.00
Sub Total .....	\$4,202.50
TOTAL .....	\$4,735.11
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Printing .....	490.00
Postage .....	525.02
Wages .....	2,300.00
FICA .....	175.96
Dividing checks .....	0.00
Bank Charge .....	13.00
Total Expenditures .....	\$3,503.98
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$1,231.13



## BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 2-1-2019 to 2-28-2019

Beginning Balance .....	\$2,032.37
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	225.00
Calvary I. B. C., Sumas, WA .....	100.00
.....	325.00
TOTAL .....	2,357.37
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Radio Time .....	363.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....	363.98
Interest .....	+ .00
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$1,993.39



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

Elder Charles E. Andrews, pastor of the Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs, LA, departed this life on March 18, 2019, at the age of 63. Please remember his wife Menette, the family, and the church in your prayers.

**“and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty”** (I Sam. 20:18).

Sister Ramona L. H. Joslin, wife of Elder Eldon Joslin pastor of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Birmingham, AL, departed this life on February 19, 2019. Please remember Bro. Joslin, and family in your prayers.

**“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy”** (Ps. 126:5).

Sister Mary Eva Thomas, wife of Elder Lyle Thomas pastor of the Berea Baptist Church of Stonington, IL, departed this life on March 13, 2019. Please remember Bro. Lyle, the family, and church in your prayers.

**“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD”** (Prov. 18:22).

The Portland Baptist Church of Plumerville Arkansas is seeking a full time pastor. Due to aging and failing health (cancer), Elder Lindy Davis is resigning as pastor. For more information call Bro. Davis at (501) 354-1859, or Email pbchurch@tcworks.net.

The Grace Landmark Baptist Church of Buckhannon, WV, is seeking a pastor. The church is Sovereign Grace and Landmark in doctrine and practice. Any interested called pastor of like faith may contact Brother Brad Butcher at (304) 669-4738 or

(304) 745-6226.  
\*\*\*\*\*  
The Stephens Branch Baptist Church of Martin, Kentucky is in need of a pastor. They are an Independent, Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Missionary Baptist church holding to the doctrines of grace and the King James Bible. If you are interested in being considered or would like more information on the church you can call Brother Lonnie Edwards at (859) 629-1413 or write the church at: Stephens Branch Baptist Church, 1025 Stephens Branch Road, Martin, Kentucky 41649.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The Philadelphia Baptist Church of Decatur, Alabama is seeking the Lord’s guidance in calling His eternally appointed man to fill the vacancy left when He called His faithful servant Elder Wm. Doyal Thomas unto his everlasting home September 29, 2018.

If any brother of like faith and order would like to be considered for that pastorate or would like information on the church please call or text Brother Mike Gibson at (256) 303-7747 or email Brother James Reynolds at admin@pbcofdecaturalabama.org. or text (ONLY) 931-452-1158.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The Berea Baptist Church



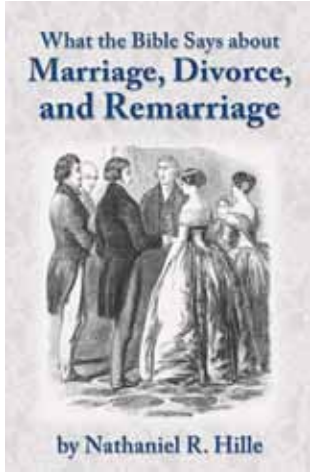
of Mantachie, Mississippi is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact (662) 282-7794 or Email:request@bereabaptistchurch.org.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The Lord’s Baptist Church in Tacoma Washington is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact Gaylen Russell at 360-879-5565 (home) or 253-495-4567 (cell) or by Email: gaylenr@rainierconnect.com.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact the church in writing at SGBC, 400 N. Main St., Caldwell, KS 67022, or by phone Brother Darin Wiley 620-863-2431.

\*\*\*\*\*  
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.

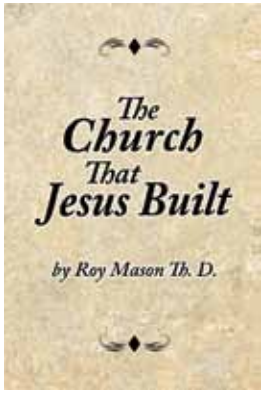
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