

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

Rule #1 & Rule #2

By Nathaniel Hille
of Plant City, Florida

"At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place. Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth. He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth. After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard. God



thundereth marvelously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend. For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength. He sealet up the hand of every man; that all men may know

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Sealed in the Spirit

By Rosco Brong
(1908 - 1985)

God "Seals" His Children in the Holy Spirit---to the Day of Redemption"

"Do not be grieving the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30, improved translation.)

The figure of a "seal" upon God's people is used repeatedly in the Bible and suggests manifold spiritual truth. Note first of all that the Holy Spirit Himself is the



seal and that this spiritual seal is affixed to all true believers in Christ---that is, to all **"that believe to the saving of the soul"** (Heb. 10:39).

"When Ye Believed"

In the King James version, Acts 19:2, we find Paul asking certain "disciples" at Ephesus, **"Have ye**

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Abstaining from All Appearance of Evil

By Joseph M. Sidders
of Guntown, Mississippi

"Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thess. 5:22), is where we find our title, but I want us to consider the psalmist's words in Psalms 97:10 as well as where it is written, **"Ye that love the LORD, hate evil..."** Do we in fact **"hate"** evil?

The word used in the letter to Thessalonica for **"abstain"** means to hold one's self off or refrain from. The word for **"appearance"** means the external or outward



appearance. The word **"evil"** means wicked or bad. In Matthew 6:13 while Jesus was teaching His disciple to pray He uses this word **"evil."** He is using it here in the nominative to denote a title. Strong's says "Hence Christ is saying, deliver us from **"The Evil,"** and is probably referring to Satan." So we can look to this verse to

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The World Cannot Hate You

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

(John 7:1-9)

These verses we are studying, take place, chronologically, within the last year of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord has many wonderful things to say to His disciples in the next few chapters of the Gospel of John, and He has many things that He has yet to say to those that are not faithful servants unto Him. The passage that we are studying today is a passage that falls in the latter category. The words that the Lord speaks in our passage today, He is not speaking to His



disciples, but He is speaking to His brethren after the flesh, and He is giving them some instruction.

THE JEWS SOUGHT TO KILL JESUS

We read in the first verse of our text, **"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him"** (John 7:1). Let me say first about this passage that the Lord is not avoiding the Jews because He fears them. He is certainly

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

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PONDERING THE TIME



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Rule #1 & Rule #2

(Continued from page 1) ♦

his work. Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places. Out of the south cometh the whirlwind: and cold out of the north. By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened. Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud: he scattereth his bright cloud: And it is turned round about by his counsels: that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy. Harken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God" (Job 37:1-14).

Some years ago, a fellow preacher made a comment. It had brought him much comfort over the years. Since having heard it, it has brought me much comfort. And even now, I rejoice in the simplicity of the truth contained therein. The saying is,

"Rule #1—GOD Is In Control.

Rule #2—SEE RULE #1."

What a wonderful statement! The Lord God is in control. What raging fire has this truth not quenched? That in the midst of many storms, the people of God have sat quietly, peaceably because "the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm" (Nahum 1:3). How many times have we uttered those words, "God is in control?" Let this saying not be a by-word phrase. How many times have we uttered those words and it failed, or we failed to find comfort because of His absolute sovereignty? Oh, that God the Holy Spirit would apply the truth of His word and this teaching, that "The LORD reigneth; let the people

tremble..." (Ps. 99:1), that God is "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (I Tim. 6:15), that we might glorify the Lord in our present situation. Well did Spurgeon state, "There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of God's Sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, they believe that Sovereignty has ordained their afflictions, that Sovereignty overrules them, and that Sovereignty will sanctify them all."

TEXTUAL CONSIDERATION

"And it is turned round about by his counsels: that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy" (Job 37:12-13).

Our text speaks of the thundering of the voice of God and the lightning. Elihu speaks of the LORD speaking to the snow, the small rain, and the great rain (Vv. 6): the wind, the cold, the frost, the waters, and the clouds are all mentioned as being directed by the Lord. All of these are at the will, counsel, and direction of the Lord. In all of this we are told, "God thundereth marvelously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend" (Job 37:5). Truly the Lord does great things. Most assuredly, they are beyond our comprehension, understanding, and our past and above our finite minds. All of these things find their cause in Him. "He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy" (Vv. 13). We ought to rest assured that the Lord is in control.

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Brief Truths

By Randy Johnson of
Texarkana, Texas

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Ephesians 1:13).



CHOOSING TO SERVE GOD

"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God" (Jos. 24:14-18).

God demands to be served and worshiped, God is a jealous God, and He does not share His glory with any one or thing. If you are going to worship God then do not worship anything or anyone else, this includes self-worship. We see the Israelites throughout the Old Testament worshipping

idols as well as self. We see people and worship centers all over the world worshipping idols and self. As Christians the command is to worship and serve God, no other worship is acceptable to God.

Joshua tells us to **"fear the LORD"** and this means to "reverence Him as the sole object of your personal life and religious worship." Fearing God is accepting Him as the Sovereign of the universe with absolute power and authority. One cannot worship God if they do not first fear Him; fear is what keeps us in line with His commands. Without obeying God's commands there is no true and acceptable worship.

Next **"serve him in sincerity and in truth."** The words "serve Him" means – completely and without blemish, or sound, without spot – that means to have your whole heart engaged in His worship. In total worship and service to God, not just on church day but everyday of your life. If you ever put ANYTHING before God or His service, ever, you are not sincere in your worship.

Next is **"and in truth"** you cannot serve God any other way than "in truth." That means according to the directions He has given you in His infallible Word. However, no one is perfect in anything in this flesh. The Word of God must be revered as He is to be revered, if it is not absolute truth then it is false. The Bible is not of private interpretation therefore, just

because you believe it does not make it the truth. God said, **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"** (II Tim. 2:15). Laziness, for pastors or churches or Christians in general is a refusal to **"rightly dividing the word of truth"** and worship God in truth.

Next, **"if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve."** Who would think it to be evil to serve the Lord? But this is those who refuse the truth of the Word. If God says it, it matters little what you believe. Study the Word without rejection and accept the truth of the Word. Do not lean upon man's wisdom, and a failure to lean upon the revelation and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. **"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him"** (James 1:5). If you seem to differ with your pastor and church on the Scriptures, find another church that you agree with, do not forget, you are responsible for your error, that is a burden you must account for yourself. **"For every man shall bear his own burden"** (Gal. 6:5). You cannot blame your pastor and church for your wrong understanding. Choose to serve the Lord, just as the Bible teaches of Him.

Next, **"but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."** The question here is, "are you and your house actually serving the Lord?" If your worship is not in absolute **"in sincerity and in truth"** then you are not serving the Lord. Refusing to believe in the sovereignty of God of the Bible is normally the first error of failure. The second is to refuse the saving power of the Holy Spirit,

and the third is refusing to believe in Jesus Christ as the absolute Saviour of mankind. **"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord"** (Luke 2:11). If you do not serve God rightly, then you do not serve God at all. In conclusion, you must in your own heart, by the reading and studying of the Scriptures and in prayer to God, conclude that you are serving God in sincerity and truth. These folks concluded **"therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God."** Folks, the interpretation of the Scriptures is everything, it matters not what people find right and popular, it only matters what God said. Seek the truth, find the truth, and believe the truth. Then find a church that teaches the truth and join them. Your rewards in eternity depend on biblical truth and following God's commandments. Your sins are paid for, they have been pardoned by God through Jesus Christ's blood. You need to choose to serve God in sincerity and in truth in a church that believes and serves the Sovereign God of the Bible, seek and you shall find.

"Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." (Jer. 29:12-13).

"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Luke 11:9-10).

(Randy Johnson is pastor of the Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Texarkana, Texas.)



Rule #1 & Rule #2

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GOD HAS ALWAYS BEEN ON HIS THRONE

Revelation 19:6, **“..for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”**

Down through history we have seen great tragedies occur. Horrific things have taken place while sinful man has dwelt upon the earth. From the disobedience of one man that plunged our entire race of humanity into sin and separation from God to our very present day, God has always been on His throne. There were times of bleakness, times of despair, times of chaos when seemingly no one was in control, but rest assured that there has never been, nor will there ever be a time when God is not in control.

We may look at the life of Joseph—whom his own brothers despised him, sought to murder him from their hearts, but through the providence of God Joseph was kept alive. His brothers sold him into slavery. There Joseph endured much contradiction of sinners. Yet, God was in control and Joseph was appointed second-in-command in all the empire of Egypt. A famine arose in the land, yet God was in control. The Lord had given Joseph wisdom, and preparation had been made for the famine. And at the conclusion of the matter Joseph testified to his brothers saying, **“But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God MEANT it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive”** (Gen. 50:20) (Emphasis: NRH).

The word “meant” may also be rendered, **“to weave, to fabricate, to plot or contrive”** (Strong’s concordance). Thus the verse may state, **“..but God wove it,**

God fabricated it, God plotted it, or God contrived it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.” You see that God had not stepped off His throne, He was not removed by circumstances or the god of this world. Rather, God was in complete control of the minutest details in the life of Joseph. He was weaving, fabricating all according to the good pleasure of His own will. Every aspect was under His control, just as the weaving of the garment is under the control of the weaver. God chooses the thread and weaves it according to His design, His plan, His will, His pleasure.

The testimony of Joseph spoke of **“..but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.”** Joseph testifies that the end of what God had woven or fabricated was to save much people. Do we not see the Lord Jesus Christ in this? Do we not see Calvary? Did not God weave and fabricate it? Was it not the Lord God who planned salvation? Was it not the Son of God who carried out that plan? Scripture states in reference unto the death of Christ at Calvary: **“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it”** (Acts 2:22-24). Yes, men by wicked hands crucified and slew Christ Jesus. Yet, God was on the throne directing all of this, for the purpose of much

people being saved! Beloved, God was in complete control. It was not an accident that Christ was on the tree of the cross. No! There He was in complete control of everything. Scriptures from centuries before were being fulfilled as Christ was suspended between heaven and earth.

And so even this, we must say that God has woven this “virus,” this presidency, this congress, this economy, this time we are in. Our present circumstances are yet but another thread in the weaving of God to save much people alive. To save them in the person of Jesus Christ. Did not Elihu state, **“He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy”** (Job 37:13). There is great mercy in the person of Jesus Christ. Oh, beloved, we are not worthy of the very least of His mercies (Gen. 32:10). Yet, in Christ Jesus is the greatest of mercies. God is in control. An “invisible enemy,” a “pandemic,” He has shut down a great deal of commerce. He has shut up many nations in their homes. Oh that you, sinner, might contemplate your need of Christ, for you are in great need of Christ; that you might fly to Him seeking Him to have mercy upon you. Sinner-friend, let me assure you that He is plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Him (Ps. 86:5). The Lord is **“rich in mercy”** (Eph. 2:4).

Dear reader, we plead with you to examine your present state for you are either in Christ and thus you are not able to be separated from the love of Christ (Romans 8) or you are outside of Christ and of all men are most miserable. And if the Lord has brought you to the realization of your present condition of being outside of Christ, will you not cry out unto Him for pardon? For cleansing?

For redemption? For salvation? For mercy?

AN ADDRESS TO THE SAINTS

Our original text is from the book of Job. And it is to Job we want to return. You know the story of Job. You know what took place in the first two chapters. Satan sought to tempt Job to sin. Yet, God put limits on what Satan could do to Job (Job 1:12; 2:6). Satan could not go beyond the limits that God set. He could do no more than what God permitted him to do. Satan is powerful, but he is not all-powerful. God is the only Potentate.

God as well said to the mighty sea, **“Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed”** (Job 38:11), so God has said to this virus. The coronavirus will proceed no further than is pleasing to Him.

Here we have two great and mighty forces in this world. Satan and the sea. Yet, we observe in the Word of God that He reigns over Satan and the sea. Corona Virus, Wuhan-flu, Covid-19 or whatever name it is going by will proceed no further than God will permit it or direct it. Make no mistake; He is in control. The same may be said of government—whether it be in the Oval Office, the halls of congress, or the federal reserve, the Supreme court, local, state or federal—they will proceed no further that God has decreed. Now His Sovereignty does not absolve man’s responsibility. These are all responsible to do what God says in His word. REMEMBER: **“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this**

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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).

MEEKNESS AND WEAKNESS

Ambrose Bierce, said meekness is, "uncommon patience in planning a revenge that is worthwhile." Meekness is not a quality we want or admire in society. I knew a man who thought meekness as an attribute to be pitied and suggested the meek Christian needed to work to get out of that frame of mind. I think his problem was not with meekness, but with the dictionary. The meek are not fighters(!) and lack strength while getting run over by anyone and everyone. But that is timidity, not meekness. We are commanded to **"...be strong in the Lord"** (Eph. 6:10), and **"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong"** (I Cor. 16:13). The armor of God is not decoration to hang in the living room, but we are to put it on and make use of it. God's people are not "men-pleasers" doing anything and everything we are asked to do, not to upset anyone, or at least we should not. As for getting run over? Matthew 5:5, **"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."**

Meekness is the spiritual result of the Spirit's work in our soul. It is not a natural attitude or something you are born with, it is humility of spirit, lowliness of mind put into action in our souls. Matthew Henry wrote, "The meek are those who quietly submit themselves before God, to His Word, to His rod, who follow His directions and comply with His designs, and are gentle

towards men" Meekness is gentleness, forbearing wrongs, and submissive to God's will. Happy are the meek? Happy is the assertive, not the submissive, and blessed are the renegades, not the followers. Happy are the rough and heartless, not the gentle. If you want to inherit the earth, you have to go get it by any means necessary, says the wisdom of the world. If you want temporary wealth and power, then by all means. The strong survive, for a little while. Do you think we could ever again elect a meek president? And if you think having a meek leader means weakness, read Numbers 12:3.

Broken by the poverty of Spirit, mourning for his own unrighteousness, the meek in Spirit is pliable to God's commands to obey, especially when it goes against our heart and natural tendencies (James 1:21). Followers of Christ have a teachable spirit and will come to the truth (Psalm 25:9) and readily receive correction from God's Word and will be pliable to God's direction. God's Word is to reprove, rebuke, exhort us, and the meek will be willing to hear.

Meekness, in fact, is strength under control, reigning in our emotions under God's direction. The meek know there is a resurrection. God will judge the wicked and set all things right. The Lord God will raise up, reward, and bless. The earth will belong to the meek, because the Meek One is our King. Jesus Christ will rule this world, and the meek will rule

with Him in His kingdom.

(Doug Newell IV is pastor of the Buffalo Valley Baptist Church of Clay, West Virginia.)



Rule #1 & Rule #2

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law" (Deut. 29:29). Let us do what God's Word says, trusting the Lord—that He is still on His throne.

CONCLUSION

Remember these two rules:

Rule #1—God is in control

Rule #2—SEE RULE #1

Elihu said that **"At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place"** (Job 37:1). His heart trembled at the truth that God was in control. There is a two-fold effect of God being in control. First, can we not but stand in awe and fearful-reverence of such a Being as this? Are we not in amazement, awe, and wonder of the great God and Savior who reigneth supreme forever and ever? Let this truth not simply put us to a complacent comfort, but rather may it stoke a fire within us to serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Heb. 12:28).

Secondly, may God calm the storms without us and within us. May the truth of God being in control grant us a peace that passeth understanding as in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving we make our requests known unto God (Phil. 4:6-7). Maranatha. Amen.



Abstaining from

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say "refrain from all external or outward appearances of Satan."

This is an important distinguishment for Christians

to make for we are not called to blend in with this world in any possible way. This word **"abstain"** is calling for us to hold ourselves in subjection to God's Word and hold it back from the world. For me personally, the Lord used this verse to lead my home away from the heathen holidays. How could I any longer practice such vain traditions when God's Word is not in support of such things? We actually did a study into why do we do Halloween or Christmas and so on and saw where some of the "holiday traditions" actually came from. Let me tell you beloved reader, you can not put Christ BACK into things He was never in to begin with!

Why is it important for a Christian to refrain from all outward appearances of Satan? Dr. Henry Morris said, "A Christian's testimony is vitally important, for it may well affect the eternal destiny of others. His question about a given act should not be, 'What's wrong with doing this?' Rather he should be guided by the question, 'What's right and positive about doing this?' Both wrong behavior and behavior which could appear to be wrong should be avoided by the conscientious Christian."

So let us consider four different portions of our own life where we might have room to repent.

First, how we attend to our church. This, beloved, is corporate worship, and it is needful for the souls of the saints of God. Hebrews 10:23-27: **"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some**

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Abstaining from

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is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." I lovingly refer to this portion of text as "Let-us-ittudes" so "let us" break down this portion of text to see why: **"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering."** The writer here is encouraging the reader to hold firmly to that common salvation; exhorting us in that we **"should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints"** (Jude 3). We see again the need to abstain!

"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works." Provoke means to incite, and Strong's even calls this word a paroxysm which infers that this is recurring and that there is a level of intensity to it, and I would even carry over to this the phrase **"without wavering."** Do we provoke one another to love and do good works like this? Beloved, Proverbs 27:17 tells us that **"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."** This means that we are quite literally stronger together. Perhaps it is not said nearly enough today but we really do need church (the church of course being each and every member fitly joined together and not the building we meet in).

This text here in Hebrews says that forsaking this assembling together is sinning willfully and that there remains no more sacrifices for willful sins;

nothing to remove the **"fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation."** This does not mean the saved will be lost but that the born-again could be subject to great fear. Can we imagine the loneliness that comes from not confirming our calling and election through the teaching and preaching and the studying of God's Word?

Secondly, let us look to how we attend to our work. Romans 14:19-23: **"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."** Even the things which we may think we have under control given a certain situation should be avoided if it may cause another to stumble or misinterpret Christ Himself. We must ask ourselves, where might the next member of our church come from? If we do not carry our love for the Lord's church with us to even our most intense working situations, how might our co-workers know of the peace that lies within us?

What about how we attend to our family? I Corinthians 6:12-13: **"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meats for the belly, and the belly for**

meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body." This is family worship and I would contend that even if you do not have kids, your spouse is your family and you should be praying and studying from God's Word together that even here you could abstain from all appearances of evil. If you have failed up to now to put this into action, do not let that be your excuse not to do it going forward.

Perhaps we have come to this message from the "I can do what I want under my own roof" crowd. Note here, beloved, that the born-again believer is no longer a slave to sin, but let us examine what that means. We are no longer slave to only sin, but we have been freed to be and do so much more. I am not free to do what I please but I have been freed to do what pleases Christ and I have been made able to enjoy that service. Apart from having faith I could not please God. Scoffers belittle what Heaven must be like if all we do is adore and worship the Father day in and day out. Beloved, if a man does not enjoy church worship now he could never enjoy Kingdom worship and he is not likely to be one of His.

Lastly, let us look at how we attend to God which is, of course, private worship. This is not just how we devote our private time to studying, but it encompasses all that we do. I Corinthians 10:31-33: **"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."** As a born-again believer

we are always on the clock. Imagine coming to my house and finding me in an indecent situation. You would be appalled! Perhaps we have lost sight of the fact that none are given a pass from being a Christian at all times. Each of us has a responsibility to abstain from all appearances of evil because we are constantly attending to God. We represent Him to the lost as well as to other born-again believers at all times. When we hurt, when we rejoice, when we encourage and even when we need encouragement. In our home my kids are quick to remind us that "we might be the only Bible someone might ever read." What do your actions show a Christian to be? What do your actions show your local church to stand for? Do you indeed abstain from all appearances of evil? May the Lord see fit to add the blessing to this message and to the lives of those striving to indeed be more Christ-like.



Sealed in the

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received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" So reads also the Douay (Catholic) version. But the English revision of 1881, the so-called American Standard Version of 1901, and the so-called Revised Version of 1946 all render this question, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost (or, Spirit) when ye believed?"

That this revised rendering is more accurate becomes manifest when we compare the uniform teaching of Scripture concerning the Holy Spirit and His people. Note especially Romans 8:9 and 14: **"...if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."** **"...as many as are led by the**

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Light Contemplations

By Luke Austin
of Cadillac, Michigan

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD" (Psalm 107:43).



THE PROBLEM WITH MODERN CHURCHES

Why do you attend where you do? Because the preacher makes you feel good? Because the people are so nice? Do you have a scriptural basis for your attendance?

WORSHIP

Worship is not good feelings, songs that repeat over and over to stir the flesh, and sound like rock songs with cuss words removed. The worship of God is the declaration of God's worth. This is not dependent upon my mood, financial state, marital status, or anything that I might receive. God is worthy to be praised in all seasons and situations of life. Also, worship is not just hymns. We worship Him in the preaching, teaching, and prayer as well. **"I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies"** (Ps. 18:3).

PREACHING

To preach is to declare or proclaim the message of God faithfully without addition or subtraction. Preach it when it causes rejoicing, preach it when it causes mourning. Feed the sheep of God with the message of God. The obvious problem is most have removed anything that might offend. They are not a faithful minister of God but an hireling seeking to profit off the congregation. The wolves in sheep's clothing have found motivational speaking is much kinder to their bank account. In

truth some of the first realizations of your soul should "feel bad." When the preacher is faithful to declare God's message it should reveal two things, God's holiness and man's sinfulness. **"He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep"** (John 21:17).

PRODUCE

This modern church mess produces false converts with false assurances. It trains people to church shop seeking which speaker makes me feel the best about myself? Which group has the most programs for my kids? Which one has a coffee bar? Who has the best sound system? Instead of which church is closest to Scripture? Which preacher declares God's Word faithfully? Which one exalts God and abases man? Unto Him be glory, not unto me. **"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen"** (Eph. 3:21).

I want to make sure I leave you with the right impression. I did not write this to say my church is better than yours, or I am right and you are wrong. The church you attend is not your salvation. Only in Jesus can we be saved. But our reason for attending the church that we do reveals what is in our heart. Do you attend for the

worship and preaching of God's Word no matter what it does to you? Or is it about you?

(Luke Austin is a member of the Cadillac Baptist Church of Cadillac, Michigan.)



Sealed in the

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Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Referring to the Greek of Acts 19:2 for grammatical construction, we find an aorist participle with an aorist indicative. The same construction appears in verse 15, where the King James version reads, "The evil spirit having answered said. . ." or, a little more freely "When the evil spirit answered he said. . ."

Now, we have in Ephesians 1:13 exactly this same construction of an aorist participle with an aorist indicative, so that we can read the latter part of this verse as follows:

"In whom (Christ) also when ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."

OWNERSHIP

One use of a seal is to mark ownership. Thus we read in Revelation 7:3: **"Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."** And in II Timothy 2:19, **"...the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his."**

So the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts marks us as His children, belonging to Him in a special sense. All creatures are His by virtue of creation, but His redeemed are made new creatures in Christ and are put in the position of being sons of God.

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying,

Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

"He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." More accurately we read, "He that received his testimony sealed that God is true" (John 3:33).

As a seal or signature on a legal document acknowledges it as the signer's "act and deed," so the presence of the Holy Spirit marks God's new creation as acknowledged by Him.

To sinners who have tried to work for God, who have thought to do the works of God, without the power and direction of His Spirit, He will say, **"I never knew you,"** and **"I know you not"** (Matt. 7:23; 25:12).

AUTHORITY

Jezebel "wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal" to authorize perjury and murder (I Kings 21:7-14).

In a better cause, Ahasuerus said to Esther and Mordecai: **"Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring; for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse"** (Esther 8:8).

Hear what the unjust king saith! And shall impudent but puny men reverse the writing of the King of heaven and earth--- writing sealed by His Holy Spirit?

Under the authority of this great seal, well may the true servants of the most high God speak His word **"with all boldness"** (Acts 4:29).

EVIDENCE

Promising Jeremiah a return of Israel and Judah from Babylonian captivity, God directed him to buy a field to which he had the right of redemption.

"And I bought the field,"

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Jeremiah tells us. **"And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances"** (Jer. 32:9-10).

The seal of the Holy Spirit bears witnesses that Christ has paid the purchase price of our redemption. We are not our own; we were bought with a price (I Cor. 6:19-20).

As evidence of this purchase, the Spirit adds power to our human testimony of the written Word. **"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake"** (I Thess. 1:5).

SECURITY

Jeremiah's evidences of purchase were put **"in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days"** (Jer. 32:14).

Foods are sealed in cans to keep them from spoiling. Letters are sealed to secure them from loss and from being opened or read by unauthorized persons. Railroad cars are sealed to secure shipments to their destinations. Bank vaults are sealed to secure contents to appointed times.

As to the seal of the Spirit, God's people were **"sealed unto the day of redemption."**

Earthly seals may be broken and fail of their purpose, but the soul sealed in the Spirit of God is secure for eternity. The sheep of the Good Shepherd **"shall never perish"** (John 10:28). The true believer in Christ **"shall never die"** (John 11:26).

EARNEST

Three times in the New Testament (II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14) the Holy Spirit is called

"the earnest." In Ephesians 1:14 we are told that the Holy spirit by Whom we were sealed **"is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession."**

"Earnest" as here used means a pledge or token payment guaranteeing completion of a transaction. In modern language it is a "down payment" or "first installment."

So the gift of the Spirit's presence and indwelling is only the beginning of our experience of salvation. Much more is yet to come, but the Spirit received is God's earnest or pledge that He will finish the work of redemption He has begun in us (Phil. 1:6).

The same thought is contained in Paul's reference to the Spirit as **"the firstfruits": "...ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body"** (Rom. 8:23).

Satan would cast doubts upon our rightful heritage, but God in the gift of His Spirit has pledged His honor to the completion of the salvation in time and eternity of all who put their trust in Him.

LIKENESS

A seal upon wax, paper, or other material reproduces a likeness of itself. Thus the Holy Spirit creates in us anew the image of God which was ruined by sin.

Paul reminded the Colossian saints that they had "put on the new man, who is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:10).

The Holy Spirit as God's seal upon His children stamps the divine likeness upon our spirits in regeneration, molds our souls into that same likeness in progressive sanctification, and finally will complete the image of God in the

glorification of our bodies at the resurrection (Phil. 3:21; I John 3:2).

If we are truly children of God, sealed by and in His Spirit, "we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18).

Knowing this work of the Spirit in our lives, how can we go on grieving Him?



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able to protect Himself and is certainly not in fear of the Jews. However, His Father has decreed (and Jesus has agreed) that the Lord should die at such and such a time. He has also decreed that the Jews would be among the instruments that are used in accomplishing His death. Therefore, He will not go into Judea at a time that would not be conducive to that purpose. He has chosen the end, but He has also chosen the means to accomplish that end. So, He will continue His life as He sees fit in order to accomplish those things that are necessary to work out the end of His life in the manner that He has foreordained.

I want to also say that this verse, once again, is a damnable verse as it concerns the Jews in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a terrible thing it is, that the Jews sought to kill the Messiah. What an awful testimony against them, that this verse should relate their state of mind, and the low esteem in which they held the Saviour. We read in John 1:11, **"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."** The Jews should have welcomed Him

with open arms; they should have cried out, "Hosanna to the King of Kings!" And yet instead they sought to kill him.

I want to say one more thing about this verse. This verse indicates to us that it was dangerous (humanly speaking) for the Lord to walk about in the land of Judea. And yet apparently He could walk about in freedom, unopposed in the land of Galilee. Now, I know that elsewhere the Lord does chastise the cities of Galilee for their unbelief (See Matt. 11:20-24). And I know that He was not received well in His own city (See Matt. 13:53-58). And I also know that His brethren after the flesh were Galileans and they did not believe Him. And yet it seems that so many of the common people did believe Him, and followed Him in great numbers. This fact flies in the face of human reasoning. It should have been that the more learned ones that were the religious and political leaders of the Jews should have been the ones that followed the Lord and recognized Him for Who He was. And yet, it was the common people and the sinners that knew Him and loved Him. In fact, the ones that believed Him and followed Him and loved Him were the very ones that were so ridiculed by the Jewish establishment. If we were to go over a couple of chapters and read in John 9, we would find a certain blind man who was healed by the Lord Jesus Christ. This man appears to have been a common man, and one that did not have any position or status amongst the Jews. The Pharisees and the chief priests and the rulers of the Jews considered this man to be a sinner. **"They**

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Small Drops

By Joseph M. Sidders of
Guntown, Mississippi

"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).



MAN'S WORKS

When sister Rebecca and I first started dating, her parents would take us to Gladwin Michigan each summer for their Bible conference. Gladwin is a wonderful small-town north of Lansing that gives you a welcome feeling. Even today we make a point to get to town early so that we can spend some time walking downtown.

On one of our earlier visits Rebecca had a pretty severe blow-out as one of her flip-flops lost its sole. Literally the entire bottom half of her sandal came unglued. With a great distance left to walk, her father and I immediately began to brainstorm as to how we were going to keep it together until we got back. One might think, purchasing a new pair of flip-flops somewhere would have come up...it most certainly did not. We talked about super-glue and staples but alas, there were none available to us. What we did have however was chewing gum. If memory serves it was good ole "Hubba Bubba" and we began chewing the life out of three or four pieces just as fast as we could.

This, believe it or not, did not work at all. I still argue that had we chewed longer there would have been less sugar to contend with but nonetheless by the end we were left with a soggy, sticky, split-in-half flip flop and a lot of laughs.

While this is a fun story, it is a great illustration for the limit to man's works. Had we fixed her flip-flop that day with our chewing

gum antics we would have gone down as Gladwin heroes of which the town...nay, perhaps even the state, would have never forgotten! Perhaps statues would have been erected to commemorate the day my wife did not have to walk home on one shoe. **"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). Praise the Lord our salvation is not dependent upon my schemes. The unconditional grace of God Himself poured forth as a free gift to the elect does not leave us limping along the side of the road but rather secures us as joint-heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven, praise God!

To Titus Paul writes that it is **"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"** in Titus 3:5-7. Praise the Lord that according to His mercy, which we do not deserve, He did not leave us to wash or renew ourselves, but He most efficiently paid it all! Man, if he could pay the necessary debt for himself, most likely would not. We would be content to hobble along with our own inventions vying for the pity of our fellow man who is, of course, flailing along in the same estate.

God saw fit **"according to His mercy"** and that in itself is a great wonder for if it was something we have earned, why should we call it mercy at all? It was the grace of God that justified us and set us upright from our sideways estate of inequity. Oh the awe we should have for the One who loves us so!

Beloved reader, nothing we could have done that day in Gladwin was going to save my wife's sole, and nothing you can do will save yours. Much like Rebecca's flip flop, there are no works by which we can perform to save our "souls." Fall now in the humility of your own depravity, repent of your man-made work-arounds and seek the Lord.

(Joseph Sidders is pastor of the Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, Mississippi.)



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answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out" (John 9:34). Possibly the Pharisees were only referring to the fact that this man was born blind, and they attributed that to the fact that he or his parents had committed some great sin (John 9:1-2). However, I think that it is somewhat more. The Pharisees, chief priests, Scribes, and the rulers all thought of themselves as better than the common people – they thought that they were righteous, and all others were sinners (Luke 18:11). Therefore they did not follow the Lord as did the multitudes of the common people. They were, in fact, contemptuous of those that believed the Lord, and they would at least ridicule and intimidate them, and perhaps do even more, if it were possible (See

John 7:13, 7:52, 19:38, 20:19).

All of this brings to remembrance the words of the Lord, **"...They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"** (Luke 5:31-32) (See also I Cor. 1:21-29). The Lord loves those that are His, and He will find them. His love is not based upon their goodness – for they have none. Rather His love is based upon His own will and the choosing mind of the Father.

THE BRETHREN OF JESUS

Even though the Jews sought to kill Jesus, His own brethren were not yet at that point. They did not at this point believe in Him, nor were they His disciples. Yet they had not been allowed by God to get to the point where they would be numbered with the Jews that sought to kill the Lord. I know that later on in their lives His brethren after the flesh would one day be included amongst His disciples. But that day had not come as of yet. We see concerning the Brethren of the Lord that at least they were somewhat religious. We read in verse 2, **"Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand."** Then we read in verse 10, **"But when his brethren were gone up..."** So they did attend the Feast of the Tabernacle, and they did attempt to be obedient to God in the things of the Law. I imagine that they were faithful Jews in many ways, but the Lord had not yet revealed Himself to them so that they would believe on Him as the Christ.

In reality, I believe that the brethren of the Lord were representative of so many of the Jews in the time of Christ. They were not physically oppressive

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unto Him, but neither were they obedient unto Him and to the Father. They sought to worship God in the traditions and teachings of the elders and they sought to be obedient to the Law of Moses. But they were not faithful after the spirit of the Law. They were somewhere in the middle. Therefore, they were apt to be rather noncommittal concerning Jesus – curious, yet not totally interested. These are the type that were easily swayed by the chief rulers and the priests at the time of the Crucifixion. The Jews, by and large, were curious about Jesus, but not interested enough to seek to stop the Jewish leaders from killing Him. In fact, they were so absent of any resolution at all that the rulers of the Jews were able to manipulate them so that they were contributors to the Death of Jesus Christ.

We read further about the brethren of the Lord: **“His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly”** (John 7:3-4). It seems to me that His brethren are being a little bit sarcastic here. I do not know if they are aware of the potential dangers that face the Lord, or if they are just wanting Him to go to Judea so that He would no longer be an embarrassment unto them in their own home. They seem to be telling the Lord, “If you want to be known openly, then you need to go into Judea. Why would you do things in secret if your desire is to be known openly?”

I tend to believe that the most important words to them, though, were the first two words, **“Depart hence...”** Really they did not desire His company. Really they did not want Him around. This is made clear to us in the next verse: **“For neither did his brethren believe in him”** (John 7:5). Is not this the case with the entire world today? Do not we all, in our naturally depraved condition, desire that the Lord would depart hence? We do not want Him or any impression of Him to be found in our own presence. We do not believe in Him and we find the idea of His presence to be contrary to our own desires.

We desire that He would depart, but how sad it is that we do not know that He is our life and Saviour. Indeed, at least some of these brethren of the Lord would one day be saved (See I Cor. 9:5; Gal. 1:19). At least some of His brethren were not just brethren after the flesh, but would one day be brethren and joint-heirs with Christ (See Heb. 2:11; Rom. 8:16-17). We are told in I Corinthians 15:7 concerning the appearance of the Lord unto some after His resurrection, **“After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.”** We know that James and Jude (Jude 1:1) came to know Jesus as their Saviour, and as the Christ, rather than as their confused older brother. Though they had formerly desired that He would depart hence, they eventually came to desire His indwelling presence. The semblance of religion that they had once had, was replaced by something more – it was replaced by a fervent desire to serve the Lord in Spirit and in Truth.

TIME

Now let us read the words of

Jesus in this passage. **“Then Jesus said 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. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come”** (John 7:6-8). At this feast the Lord is setting in motion the events that will lead to the crucifixion. Here, in the next few days and weeks, He will say the words, and do the deeds that will infuriate the Jewish leaders to the point that they will seek to kill Him (John 7:32; 8:59; 10:31, 39). However, Jesus was always conscious of time. He saw time in the concept of my time and your time. He would do all things according to the timing that He and the Father had decreed. In essence, all time is His, and therefore He could claim that time was my time. But the point that is being made here is that His will cannot be circumvented, and the foreordaining powers of God will be obeyed. It was not yet His time to go up to the feast – that would wait a day or so. It was not yet His time to die – that would be in just a few months. However, it was the time for His brethren to go up unto the feast. It was their time to be obedient to the things that they sought to obey.

We might also say that in a sense we can apply the words of the Lord to each of us. He tells His brethren, **“..your time is always ready.”** Sure these other things I have mentioned are true, it was their time to do the things of the world and to participate in their dead religion. But in a sense, if they only would recognize it, their time was also ready to repent and turn to God.

Remember when Paul witnessed before Felix. We read in Acts 24:24-25, **“And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”** Felix was not ready to believe on Christ because the Lord had not yet worked with him. Perhaps the Holy Spirit never came upon Felix to cause him to see his needs before God. However, that does not change the fact that Felix should have received the words of Paul. But instead he said, **“Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”** I want you to know, that after the flesh there is never a convenient season to hear the Word of the Lord. But do know this, **“For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”** (II Cor. 6:2). Any day is the day that you and I should believe. There is never a day or a time when we should not be obedient unto Him. Even in our natural estate we are all responsible to believe on Him, and that time is always ready.

Next we see that the Lord tells His brethren, **“The world cannot hate you...”** That is because they were of the world. The world would not hate its own. Sure they might not always be in agreement with the things of the world, but the world could never hate them. They were carnal

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and fleshly, and they were of the world. Therefore there could not be enmity between them, but there would be friendship with the world. The world could not hate them as long as they were of the dark. As long as they did not expose the evilness of the works of the world, the world could not hate them.

However, we see that the world did hate the Lord. He said, **"..but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil."** We read in John 3:19-20, **"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 everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."** These verses contain the simple explanation of why the world hated Jesus, but did not yet hate His brethren. Quite simply, the world was **"evil,"** and the Lord Jesus was **"light."** The **"light"** that was in Him, shined into the **"darkness"** that was in the world and exposed their evil works. As long as the brethren of the Lord were a part of that **"darkness"** and **"evil"** the world could not hate them. But, once they (or you and me) were made recipients of the **"light"** that is in Jesus Christ, then they will hate us, for His Light will reveal them as they are, and they will not be able to hide from that **"light."**

Brothers and sisters in Christ, do you and I shine forth that **"light"** as we should? It seems to me that the hatred of the World is evidence of the effectiveness of our witness of Christ. It seems to me that the hatred of the World is a product of the

intensity of the **"light"** that is in us. If the world does not hate us, then it can only be because we are not obviously different from it. If we are truly saved and the world does not hate us, then it can only be because we are obscuring that **"light"** that is within us. If the world does not hate us, then we are obviously not shining forth a light that reveals the wickedness that is in the world – otherwise the world would hate us.

The brethren of Jesus were willing to go up unto this feast. They were willing to partake of the things of the world, and to lose themselves in the religion of the Jews. Therefore, the world could not hate them. How often do you and I participate in the things of the world, just so that we can get along with them? I suppose that it is possible

for even a Christian to live (at least for a little while) without inciting the hatred of the world, as long as he does the things that conform with the world.

CONCLUSION

The final words of our text read thusly: **"When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee"** (John 7:9). Do not ignore the words of the Lord Jesus! These are important words, whether you are unsaved, or whether you are saved. If you are unsaved, consider that this Saviour came and did the will of the Father. He came to die for those that were given to Him. We have seen that some of those were His own brethren. They did not currently believe on Him in this passage, but they soon would. They would soon behold Him as their Saviour, instead of as the fanatic older brother. He

would give His life for them, but He would do it in His own time.

If you are saved, will not you consider the fact that the testimony of Jesus Christ should also be ours? Should not we also be hated of the world, even as He was? Not that we should deliberately incite hatred, but that we should live an exemplary life that will shine forth the light of Jesus Christ and reveal the wickedness and sinfulness of man, and then point him to that Saviour that can redeem.

Consider the following verses, and consider your own faithfulness to Christ as you read these verses: Please remember that we are His. **"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"** (I Cor. 6:20). Remember also that we are ambassadors for Christ. **"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God"** (II Cor. 5:20). The Lord also said, **"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"** (John 17:16).

I pray that God would make us willing to stand out from the world. I believe that that is the only way we can make a statement today. We cannot warn others of their need for repentance when we seemingly condone the sins in which they are involved. We cannot preach Jesus Christ to others when it is not immediately obvious that we know Him. Let us, you and me, stay home from the feast of the world, and let us, you and me, do the will of God.

(Paul Stepp is pastor of the Indore Baptist Church of Indore, West Virginia.)



END

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. What is meant by **"Bear ye one another's burdens,"** in Galatians 6:2?

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First let us look at the word **"burden"** and its meaning. The meaning is: that which is carried; load: that which is borne with difficulty; obligation; the burden of leadership. As pastor I know this burden all too well, especially being a missionary and trying to make decisions when it comes to building the new building that is in progress.

The burden can be even a heavier load or burden that people have difficulties or problems dealing with. But we need to see the **"burden"** this verse is talking about. The rest of this verse says, **"and so fulfil the law of Christ."** So, what is the law of Christ? I believe it is the law of love which fulfills the entire law. Here are some Biblical verses that may help us see this a little clearer.

Galatians 5:14: **"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."**

John 13:34: **"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."**

Romans 13:8: **"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."**

Romans 13:10: **"Love worketh**

no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

I am sure if you, dear reader, would take time to really study these verses you would come to the same conclusion that I have, loving is really tough, and it can be a real **"burden"** at times. I am sure everyone has had to struggle with loving someone to the full extent of these verses, it can be done but it is pretty hard when someone (brother or sister especially) really is irritating or gets under our skin. I am sure, dear reader, you have never experienced this (a little sarcasm).

I was asked once at a men's Bible study by an elderly brother if I knew who my neighbor was, (that was what we were studying). I was embarrassed first of all, (I was in my early 20's and a very young Christian) and I had no idea how to answer. The brother was really annoying me and the pastor had me come over and sit by him. So, I will ask the same question, who is your neighbour that Paul is referring to, the one you are supposed to love? Well, it is your brother and sister in Christ Jesus!

This is hard to do, it is a **"burden"** at times like I said. Paul said, **"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men"** (Rom. 12:18).

Now we are to **"bear"** (which means to hold up; support) this **"burden"** with one another, before it gets the best of us. We should be able to talk about how we feel about a certain person (**"burden"**), I do not mean talk about a person behind their back, but talk to someone and share this

"burden" so we can fulfill the law of Christ. If you can not talk to someone about it, it will eat at you and fester and Satan will use it as an advantage against us. **"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices"** (II Cor. 2:11). And trust me, he will!

In closing, let me tell you a little story that the Lord had to teach me. I still continue to hear it from others today, and it should be words that never come out of our mouths. I was so upset with a brother in Christ one time in the church, and I made this statement to another brother in the church that knew this brother longer and better than I did. Here is what I said, "I love ___ as a brother, but I can't stand him as a person." Which really was not true, because we were friends, but he really irritated me sometimes. There is another version of this, "I love you in the Lord!" When I hear that, what the person is really saying is, "I love you in the Lord, but as a person, I can not stand you," at least that has been my experience and that is my opinion.

You either love me, or you do not; it is as simple as that: love all of me, faults included, or do not love me at all. But you can not really separate the person by saying "I love you in the Lord," because I will answer you, no you do not. And until you realize that and confront it, there will always be friction. That is why Paul wrote, **"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ"** (Gal. 6:2). I believe, what happens sometimes is that a person gets mad at me as their pastor and they think by saying "I love you in the Lord" eases their conscience, but in truth, it does not. But like me, only the Lord can convict them of that. I still,

myself, have trouble with this when a person aggravates me, but I have tried to look past it and go on, because usually it is just an in the moment thing. I get over myself after a while, because it only is hurting me. If anyone is mad at me, then they have to get over themselves. That is where the Lord's commandment comes in. **"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another"** (John 13:34). I am sure glad Jesus loves me; He loves me unconditionally, even when I mess up! Would it not be nice if we loved each other as He does, we are commanded to!

One last thought! My wife and I irritate each other sometimes (me more so because I am an agitator), but we love each other in spite of our faults, no one is perfect, so we need to read our Bibles and study. Meditate on these verses, dear reader. **"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil"** (Eph. 4:25-27).

Oh, I almost forgot, when I had made that statement that I said to one brother about the other, he told him what I said and the brother I said it about came to me and confronted me about what I said, oops... **"But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out"** (Num. 32:23). I felt like a fool, and we talked it out and became closer than before. Lesson learned! Like I said above, when we get so mad at someone, we think we are hurting them, but most of the time the other person does not know we

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What is an "effectual fervent prayer" as mentioned in James 5:16?

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"And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched" (Num. 11:1-2).

I see here in these two verses, that this could not have been a prayer by Moses that was haphazard, but very serious in nature. God was consuming the people with fire because of their complaining, and Moses had to have a vigorous, and passionate prayer. In other words, Moses had to be very serious in his request to God. And the beauty of it was, the Lord's anger was quenched, and the people of Israel were saved from the Lord's wrath.

So, the effectual (powerful and successful) fervent prayer of a righteous (godly) man will accomplish much. God is going to hear and answer that kind of prayer. Many times, our prayers are not sincere, and if we are not serious, why should God answer them? I picture the righteous (godly) sincere Christian on their knees in serious prayer to God, I believe this will accomplish their

request to a holy, sovereign God.

Let us do better in our prayer life, so that "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," then we will get the answers we are looking for. I believe serving God is serious business. God Bless!

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"...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). "Effectual" logically means in our text "a prayer that is heard and answered." It worked! It was effective! Problem solved! Message delivered! That James adds "**fervent**" to this notation of an effectual prayer intimates to me that "non-fervent" or casual prayers are not apt to be effectual. If we are not sincere in saying "Thank you, Lord!" will it reach Him and be marked, "message delivered? Course not! But, if we, from the bottom of our heart, whisper "Thank you, thank you, thank you..." it does not matter if no one else in the world hears it—God does. Selah! Think about it!

Prayer is communication with God. We all know this. It is "talking with God," but the very essence of an answered, or effective prayer is that we "hear," "know" or "realize" God's answer to our plea or rejoinder, right? It cannot be called a conversation if our

prayers consist only of us telling God what we want, need and hope for, without even knowing if He's heard and responded. If we never realize the benefits of intimate correspondence—why continue praying? Certainly the best part of prayer is in the surety of God's wonderful answers. Rejoice! We have heard from God, again Hallelujah! Selah! Think about it!

If the answers are the best part of prayer for the saint, what is the best part of prayer for God, Himself? **"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit..."** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 34:18; 51:17). It is when we are broken and weeping on our knees and prostrating ourselves "fervently and effectually" in true worship before our almighty God and merciful Saviour! **"This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness"** (Lam. 3:21-23).

Our fervent prayers are effectual only as they touch His heart with ardent love and thankful rejoicing. He knows true repentance as well as true gladness. Both such prayers will find answers and blessing from our faithful and pitiful God. What a sweet intertwining of love betwixt Creator and creation; between Heavenly Father and obedient child. Effectual prayer is not the casual greetings of an acquaintance, but rather the whispered fervor of a lover to her Beloved. Thus begin the greatest prayers of our lives, each and every day, as we send up effectual, fervent prayers that touch and

move the heart of our sovereign God. That is Psalm 62:5-8: **"My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah."** Think about it!

It is worthy of note that James does not expect this righteous man's effectual fervent prayers to fall on deaf ears or to bounce off a sky of brass, they are absolutely going to be answered. Be confident! We can know and pray confidently because I love Him and He loves me. Awesome, is it not. There is a vibrant and vital relationship that God builds with a righteous man or woman. We are right to trust in Him! We are right to know He is our only Rock and Refuge. From such a basis of righteousness, will flourish a garden of effectual, fervent prayers every time.

If it is a fake love that we have for our God, then unrighteousness will be the avenue of our prayers. If we do not love Him truly, how can we expect true love in return? Even a lukewarm love will not suffice. **"So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth"** (Rev. 3:16) But how could we expect anything less? Truly, to pray these listless, impotent prayers of selfishness, apathy, and taking our heavenly Father for granted, would not be worthy of a response. May God help us to be faithful and loyal to our Lover. Grant us a fervor and adoration that fades not away. Gift us once again (if we have

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Forum Question #1

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are mad at them and the only person we are hurting is ourselves, and guess who took advantage of the situation? Yep, Satan did! God Bless!

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Galatians chapter six starts off by describing some of the manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit as they are practically demonstrated by walking in the Spirit. Hence the phrase “.. **ye which are spiritual.**” This was a stark contrast to what the Judaizers and legalists were recommending to the Galatian believers. The fruit of spiritual life created by the Holy Spirit will be a spiritual walk characterized by the ability to restore an erring brother (6:1), burden bearing (6:2), humility (6:3), accountability (6:4-5), and supporting the work of the ministry (6:6).

A Christian profession will be of little worth unless there is an equitable balance between doctrinal truth and practical application of the truth. Those who are walking in the Spirit will be vessels through which the Holy Spirit produces measurable fruit. Galatians 6:1-6 reveals the things that characterize a believer who is actively bearing fruit through the power of the Holy Spirit. Some important marks of genuine, living spirituality are stressed in the verses under consideration. I did a verse by verse exposition of Galatians that I hope to publish

some day. Here is an excerpt explaining Galatians 6:1-2 as it relates to a spiritual walk and bearing one another's burdens.

ABILITY TO RESTORE AN ERRING BROTHER (6:1)

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1).

1. Paul once again uses a term of endearment by addressing the Galatian believers as his brethren. He loved them and cared for their spiritual welfare as every minister of the Gospel should. Even though Paul has spent a majority of the epistle correcting the Galatians and scolding them for their reception of the Judaizers, he nevertheless considers them as his brethren who are in need of instruction.

2. Paul commands those who are spiritual to restore an erring brother who has fallen into error or sin. All men are prone to sin because of the old nature that opposes spiritual truth and actively seeks to transgress against God. The person who is overtaken in a fault is one who does not deliberately and habitually follow a path of sinfulness. Rather, he is one who in an unguarded moment commits a sin against the Lord by succumbing to his base nature. It is an individual who is suddenly overcome by temptation, who has temporarily gone astray from Christian principles and practice. A good example would be a brother or sister who in an unguarded moment lost their temper and said unkind, malicious, and angry words to another believer.

3. Those who are walking in the Spirit, producing spiritual fruit, and are strong in the Lord are to restore the erring brother or

sister who has been temporarily overtaken in a fault. They are to go to the erring brother or sister in a spirit of meekness and gentleness, not in anger or malice, with a sincere desire to restore them though a timely rebuke. The word restore in the Greek language carries with it the idea of setting a bone that has been broken or dislocated. You do not automatically amputate a limb of the human body that has been broken or dislocated. Rather with great care and gentleness a skilled physician will try and reset the bone so as to promote healing and restore its usefulness.

John Gill gave an interesting comment on this verse:

“Professors fallen into sin are like broken and dislocated bones; they are out of their place, and lose both their comfort and usefulness, and are to be restored by gently telling them of their faults and mildly reproving them for them; and when sensible of them, and troubled for them, by speaking comfortably to them, and by bringing them again, and resettling them in their former place in the church, and restoring them to their former usefulness and good conduct.” (Vol. 9, p. 52)

4. Anytime someone reproves or rebukes an erring brother it should be done in meekness. We need to go to the erring brother without pride or arrogance in our attitude, but rather with a spirit of humility and gentleness. We are to show the sinning brother the inconsistency of his opinion or actions with the Word of God, and gently warn him of the consequences of his behavior. Our chief aim should always be restoration when dealing with a fallen brother. Paul specifies that the work of reproving and restoration must be done by those who are spiritual within the

churches. There were obviously some in the churches who were not spiritually minded, and therefore disqualified for the task at hand. Those who gloat and delight in the failures of others are definitely not qualified to reprove an erring brother. A Christian who is critical, judgmental, and mean-spirited should never be sent on a mission of restoration. Restoration of an erring brother calls for meekness and patience, not rudeness and impulsiveness. I Thessalonians 5:14 declares: **“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.”**

5. Not only are those who are spiritual to reprove and restore the erring brother in meekness, they are also to realize that they are capable of being overtaken in a fault as well. Spiritual men and women are prone to sin and to succumb to temptation. One only has to read of the examples scattered throughout the record of Holy Scripture. Noah walked with God and obeyed His voice, but was overtaken by drunkenness. Abraham was a man of great faith, yet he lied to Abimelech. David was a man after God's own heart, yet he committed adultery with Bathsheba. These examples are given, not to justify sin in any form, but rather to illustrate the fact that spiritual people can be overtaken in a fault. How carefully we must guard our hearts and minds against temptation and sin lest we be overtaken in a fault!

BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS (6:2)

“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2).

1. A person who is walking in the Spirit and is found actively

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Forum Question #1

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bearing spiritual fruit will be able to obey the admonition of this verse. A person who is spiritual is going to try to help others who are going through difficulties and are bearing heavy burdens. A true disciple of Christ will want to lend a hand to those who are struggling. To bear another's burden is to do whatever we can to relieve or comfort the one in need. We are to follow the Golden Rule of Matthew 7:12: **"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."**

2. The Judaizers had tried to put the Galatians under the burden of keeping the law as a means of justification. Paul urges them to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. The law of Christ is the law of love which seeks to be a help and a blessing to others by doing them good. Love is manifested to others when we show them we care about them by actively shouldering their burdens and concerns. Jesus Christ bore our burden of sin on the cross, being put to a cruel death to pay the full penalty of our sins. We are to follow the example of our Beloved Savior by sacrificially giving of ourselves to others. Bearing the burdens of others will cost us time, money, pleasure, and effort. Yet, we will be rewarded for fulfilling the law of Christ in this world and in the world to come.

3. There can be no higher goal or aspiration among believers than to aim at fulfilling the law of Christ. How we ought to walk in His commands with joy and delight in His ways! Conformity to the law of Christ is conformity to the law of love. Oh, that God

would enable us to walk even as our Blessed Savior did!

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"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Bearing one another's burdens in this challenging verse of service is tied to fulfilling "the law of Christ." That law is clearly mandated in several places in Scripture, but very clearly just fourteen verses preceding our text: **"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"** (Gal. 5:14). The greatest commandment of Christ is simply, **"Thou shalt love..."** Hear it from His own precious lips in Matthew 22:35-40, **"Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."**

Can you hear the words of our Lord echoing down throughout Scripture whenever there is a question of the law? What will His first response be? **"Thou shalt love...!"** What will His second response be? **"Thou shalt love...!"** Selah! Think about it!

Loving our neighbor is tied

to this **"Bear ye one another's burdens..."** So the real question is what might be "another's burdens?" Paul is probably not talking about backpacks full of gold or ham sandwiches, eh? Or even common physical loads of our professions such as garage door parts, company files or loads of laundry. Henry Morris says these burdens are "human frailties" in vs. 2 and "responsibilities" in vs. 5. Expositorily, those human frailties may be fears, sorrows, loneliness, pain, bitterness, faithlessness, etc. The apostle is exhorting us to help others bear, or cope with the weight of these difficult and heavy burdens. In the flesh, or even in a weakened state of a usually strong Christian, these burdensome weights may at times become too arduous for any one person to bear alone. But how can we bear their sorrow and grief at their great loss of a loved one? I am sure that we all know from experience that love will weep with them and also point them to the One that wipes away all tears. Love will part the darkness with the light of her precious Scriptures and truisms that will conquer and cast out any and all fear (I John 4:18). Love will dispel loneliness with a hug and the touch of true affection—"I will go with you..." "I am just a phone call away!" "I care, and this is a burden that you will not have to carry alone... I am here for you...!" **"..for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law"** (Rom. 13:8).

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12). The golden rule's very premise is that if we would desire others to help us carry our heavy burdens, then we should earnestly seek out those in

need of our help in carrying their onerous burdens. Because as often as we think it is others that need our help, it is very frequent that we find ourselves bent low to the earth under another temptation or trial. In these overwhelming hours of fear, grief, or weakness, God will already have some other soul or angel en route to love us and cheerfully help to bear our burdens, too. Our Lord has filled the holy pages of Scripture with promises of never forsaking us, nor leaving us. How often are those promises fulfilled as we come together in love to bear each other's burdens. The very presence of God is felt in the faithfulness of our Christian friends. Praise God! Selah! Think about it!

What will lighten the burden of a weary pilgrim in this benighted world of woes and snares? A gift of love? A gift of joy? ...of hope? ...of gentleness, meekness, or faith? I do not think it is a coincidence that the fruits of the Spirit are between these two precious passages. May God give us the opportunity today to **"Bear ye one another's burdens..."** by His grace. And if we are the ones toiling under heavy and debilitating burdens, may the gifts of God come pouring through His worthy servants at the Big Creek Baptist Church or your local assembly. May we fulfill the law of Jesus Christ and be obedient to the command of God to **"Thou shalt love...!"** **"Now the end (purpose/goal) of the commandment (Law) is charity (love) out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:"** (I Tim. 1:5) **"Thou shalt love...!"** Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



Forum Question #2

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grown cold) with the heat and passion of a love for Thy Word, Thy house, and Thy Person! Then the **"...effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"** (James 5:16) Selah! Think about it!

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"Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (James 5:16-18).

I find it interesting that powerful praying is associated with the honest and open confession of sin as stated in the first part of verse 16.

What I wrote in a previous Forum answer is worth repeating: Genuine confession of sin is one of the keys that opens the throne of grace to the believer. Psalm 66:18 declares: **"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer."** It stands to reason that if God will not hear our prayers if we regard iniquity in our hearts, then it is imperative that we rid our hearts of those

sins that would obstruct the blessings of God. If we want God to hear our prayers and answer them favorably, then we must be faithful to confess our sins.

Another key ingredient to powerful prayer is a righteous life lived according the standards of the Word of God. The moment we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ in saving faith we receive His imputed righteousness and are legally declared free from the penalty of sin. From that point on, the believer is commanded to practice righteousness by following the holy example of Christ and walking in His steps. A hunger for righteousness is marked by a genuine desire to concisely obey the commands, precepts and principles contained in the Holy Scriptures. God loves to see His children walking in cheerful obedience to His holy laws. When we are walking thusly, we can be sure that our prayers will be effectual. Practically speaking, the success of our prayer life is dependent in part on our right relationship with God. We can expect no power in prayer if our lives are characterized by open or secret rebellion to God. Perhaps one of the reasons why our prayers are so weak and unavailing is because we are failing to practice righteous living in our daily walk.

With that said, we can now reflect on what effectual, fervent praying is characterized as. Effectual means to put forth power, to be operative, to work. The Greek word for effectual is *energeo* which is where we get our English word energy. This word implies that powerful praying requires spiritual energy. Fervent means to be hot or to boil over. When you put these two words together in their relationship to powerful praying it means that

our prayers must be marked by spiritual life and vitality. Form prayers that are monotonous, repetitive, and lifeless will not do. We must engage the Almighty in prayer with a sincere interest in gaining a hearing. Powerful praying must come from a heart moved by the Spirit of God with a genuine desire to fellowship with the Lord. When we consider that in prayer we are addressing the most wonderful, gracious, and powerful Person in all the universe, our heart's should be filled with holy enthusiasm. If we really grasped the awesome power of God our prayer lives would be marked by a greater degree of spiritual furor accompanied by a sense of expectation.

The power of a righteous man who prayed effectually and fervently is found in the life of the prophet Elijah. He prayed earnestly for it not to rain and it did not. Then he prayed that it would rain, and it did! Elijah was a man of intense prayer and supplication. He prayed for rain after a long period of drought. No one but Elijah expected God to send rain. All of the circumstances and probabilities were against the praying of Elijah. However, you can never underestimate the power of a praying man! God answered the prayer of the prophet by sending showers from a cloud that at first appeared to be no bigger than a man's hand (I Kings 18:41-45)!

There are many other examples of powerful, effectual, and fervent prayer in the Bible which should encourage us to pray in faith. Abraham prayed for God to spare someone from the destruction of Sodom and Gommorah, and Lot was delivered from the fiery wrath that fell upon those cities (Gen. 18-19). Joshua prayed that the sun would stand still (Josh. 10:12-

13). Elijah prayed and the widow's son was restored to life (I Kings 17:19-22). Elisha prayed and he Shunamite's son was restored to life (II Kings 4:32-35). Hezekiah prayed and 185,000 Assyrian soldiers were slain (Isaiah 37:21, 36). The Jerusalem church prayed and Peter was miraculously released from prison (Acts 12:5-10). All of these examples prove what a powerful resource genuine, effectual, fervent prayer to the Almighty really is! Oh, that we would learn to tap into that power and pray with greater faith and fervor.

The power of effectual, fervent prayer is not in man, but in God. Elijah was a man marred by the effects of human depravity just like you and me. The God of Elijah, Elisha, Peter, James, and John is still the God of Tom Ross! God has not changed! He is still all powerful and ready to hear the earnest supplications of His children! What an encouragement for each of us to take God at His Word and believe the glorious promise contained in Jeremiah 33:3 which declares: **"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."**

TOM ROSS





From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Two Invitations

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

This text is viewed by many to be God's last invitation ever given to come to Christ for salvation in Holy Scripture. I do not deny that the last part of the verse is an invitation to a sinner to take the water of life freely. But a careful study of the verse reveals two different invitations. The first two "comes" are an invitation for Christ to return. The last "come" is an invitation for thirsty sinners to come to Christ and drink of the water of life. There is seen in this text an invitation for Christ to return and for the sinner to turn to Christ.

I. THE FIRST INVITATION THE HOLY SPIRIT

The first one to invite Christ to return is the Holy Spirit: **"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come."** The theme of the Book of Revelation is seen in chapter 1, verse 7: **"Behold, he cometh."** In chapter 22 of this Book, verse 7, Christ said: **"Behold, I come quickly."** Again in verse 12 He said: **"And, behold, I come quickly."** Revelation 22:17 is the response of the Spirit to the promise of Christ. The Spirit says, **"Come,"** or perhaps better, **"Come thou."**

While on earth Christ promised that the Spirit would be greatly concerned with the last things: **"Howbeit when he, the Spirit**

of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:13). Ever since the Spirit came to empower the Jerusalem church on the day of Pentecost, He has been active and operative in the churches of Jesus Christ. The Spirit has especially sought to keep the minds of God's people upon the topic of Christ's second coming (II Thess. 3:5) and the establishment of His righteous kingdom on earth. Those who read the Book of Revelation **"hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches"** (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

In this age the Holy Spirit is working in the true churches, and Spirit-filled preachers are preaching that Jesus is coming soon. Christians led by the Holy Spirit **"love his appearing"** (II Tim. 4:8) and are **"waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"** (I Cor. 1:7). Where there is no delight in the doctrine of the second coming of Christ there is no Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is greatly concerned with the return of Christ. After the Rapture of the saints His restraining work will almost totally cease (II Thess. 2:7). He will certainly regenerate the Lord's people during the seven-year tribulation period and work in them who preach the gospel of the kingdom (Matt.

24:14; Dan. 12:3). The Spirit will continue to do the same in the millennium, but in a greater sense than He has ever done in the past (Joel 2:28-29; Zech. 12:10). The Spirit in the millennium will in a very special way work upon the nation of Israel (Ezek. 36:24-27; 37:14; 39:29; Jer. 31:33). The Spirit is concerned with the second advent of Christ to earth because Christ is to rule in the fullness of the Spirit (Isa. 11:2).

THE BRIDE

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." The word "bride" speaks of the church in the generic sense in this present age. After the Rapture of the saints the word "bride" speaks of the churches in the collective sense. It is certainly true at the present time that each church is the bride of Christ (II Cor. 11:2; John 3:29) even as each church is the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:27). Following the Rapture the aggregate of all true churches will constitute the bride, and after her marriage to Christ in Heaven she becomes "the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 19:7). The invitation, **"Come,"** only holds good while the church is still the bride-elect and not the actual wedded wife. After the wedding Christ and His church are joined together. It is only during His absence that the bride greatly desires His return (S. of S. 8:1-4).

The members of New Testament churches are to eagerly and earnestly desire for Christ to return. The Corinthian church is pictured as **"waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"** (I Cor. 1:7). Paul told the church at Thessalonica **"to wait for his Son from heaven"** (I Thess. 1:10). To the Philippian church Paul wrote: **"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ"** (Phil. 3:20).

To the Colossian Church he declared: **"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory"** (Col. 3:4). Writing again to Titus, the pastor of the church at Crete: **"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ"** (Tit. 2:13). The writer of the Book of Hebrews said: **"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation"** (Heb. 9:28). Peter told pastors of scattered churches: **"And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away"** (I Pet. 5:4). John told the little children of God to remain in fellowship with Christ lest they **"...be ashamed before him at his coming"** (I John 2:28). John closed the Book of Revelation by saying, **"...Even so, come, Lord Jesus"** (Rev. 22:20).

Any time a church ceases to look and long for the return of her heavenly Bridegroom she has become a spiritual harlot. The true bride of the Lamb preaches and teaches much on the second coming of her Lord and Savior. She is busy making disciples, baptizing these disciples, and teaching them Christ is coming soon. The faith and hope of the church is that Christ is coming again as He said He would. This sets the church apart from the unbelieving world. Jesus promised the church: **"...I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"** (John 14:3). The cry of the church on earth is: **"Come quickly, Lord Jesus, and take us to the Father's house of many mansions."** Soon Christ is going

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to respond to the cry of the bride, **"Come."**

HIM THAT HEARS

The bride consists of baptized believers who are in good standing in New Testament churches. Not all saved people are in true churches. Some of God's elect are in the Great Whore (Rev. 18:4), and you cannot be in God's church and the Devil's church at one and the same time (I Cor. 10:21; Matt. 6:24). Other saved people have been excluded from churches for disorderly conduct (I Cor. 5:1-13; Matt. 18:17; II Thess. 3:6, 14-15). The person mentioned in Revelation 22:17 is a saved person outside the Lord's church that has spiritual ears given to him. He can understand what the Spirit and church say about the return of Christ. He can join with them in inviting Christ to **"come."**

The one that hears is one that God has wrought a work of grace in by His mighty power. Proverbs 20:12 says: **"The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them."** By nature man is deaf and blind to the things of God: **"Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive"** (Matt. 13:13-14). The person in Revelation 22:17 hears and obeys in spiritual things. The new birth is necessary to spiritual understanding (John 3:3). A man must have spiritual life before he can cry to Jesus, **"Come."** John is saying let him that hears and

obeys the voice of Christ (John 10:16) join in crying, **"Come."**

ANOTHER VIEW

Some reject my application of the first part of the verse which I say is an invitation for Christ to return. They make "come" in all three occurrences to be an invitation to lost sinners to come to Christ. They say that the Spirit gave all the gospel invitation recorded in the Bible. They say that by His influence over the heart of men He invites sinners to come to Christ. These people say that the bride, or church, is to invite all to come and be saved. They say those who hear the gospel must go and invite others to come to Christ.

I do not dispute that the Holy Spirit calls thirsty and willing sinners to come to Christ. Neither do I deny that the church must go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15) and invite sinners to come to Christ. These truths are seen in other places in the New Testament, but the first part of Revelation 22:17 does not teach these truths. Rather the first part of the verse is the Holy Spirit, the bride, and a born-again soul outside the church inviting Christ to return.

Objectors to my view come back and say that the first part of the verse cannot be understood as expressing a wish and prayer for the coming of the Lord. They say the change is too abrupt with no intimation of change. They also say the words are much closer connected with verse 16 than verse 12, and thus they make the whole verse an invitation to salvation only.

Their position is unsound and untenable. There are many abrupt changes and intervals in the Book of Revelation. In chapter 12 John goes from the

seven-year tribulation period back to the birth and ascension of Christ (Rev. 12:4-6). Also verse 16 of Revelation 22 is not about salvation as Arminians claim. Look at it: **"I Jesus have sent my angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."** Consider what Jesus said: **"I am the root and offspring of David** (Creator of David and his descendants--- quite a jump in time), **and the bright and morning star."** There is a relation of the morning star to the daydawn. When Christ appears the new day is about to dawn. In this manner Christ is the Morning Star (Rev. 2:28; Num. 24:17). So the last words in Revelation 22:16 are about the coming of Christ, and hence the Spirit and the bride say to Christ, **"Come."** It is my opponents who ignore the preceding verse as well as the context (Rev. 22:7, 12, 20).

It seems to me that those who see only one invitation to salvation in Revelation 22:17 ignore the purpose of the whole Book of Revelation. This Book was written to seven churches (people already saved) on the theme: **"Behold, he cometh"** (Rev. 1:7). It is a book of prophecy (Rev. 1:3; 22:18-19) intended to show us the **"...things which must be hereafter"** (Rev. 4:1). The Book of Revelation was not written to be an invitation to lost sinners to come to Christ so they could be saved. Certainly redemption and salvation are found in the Book, but they are not its primary theme.

It is worth noting that in the first invitation it is the Spirit, the Bride, and a hearer inviting someone to come, but in the last invitation it is the thirsty and willing that are invited to come to Christ. The first is an

invitation from saved sinners for Christ to come, and the second is an invitation from Christ for lost sinners to come to Him for the water of life. The first is an invitation to Christ to come; the second an invitation from Christ for the sinner to come.

II. THE SECOND INVITATION

The last part of the verse is Christ's last invitation to thirsty and willing sinners to come to Him for salvation. Here is an entire change in reference to the word **"come."** Before the Spirit, the bride, and the hearer desired Christ to come bodily and physically. Now Christ invites the sinner to come to Him for the water of life. The last part of the verse are the words of Jesus Christ inviting some to come, and this coming is spiritual, not bodily and physically. It is like the invitation in Matthew 11:28: **"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."**

According to the context of Revelation 22:17, it must mean to come to the water of life which flows in the New Jerusalem. These waters do not actually flow until Christ returns. If any man has an appetite for these waters, then let him come and drink until he is full. Revelation 7:17 declares: **"For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."** Christ promises in Revelation 21:6: **"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."** The last part of Revelation 22:17 may be nothing more than Christ inviting His people to come and to literally drink of the river of life which

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Moderate Steps

By Paul Stepp of
Indore, West Virginia

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD:
and he delighteth in his way." (Psalm 37:23).



TRUSTING GOD

"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Ps. 55:22).

Following God and serving Jesus Christ is not always easy in this life that we live. This verse from the Psalmist lets us know that there are burdens that we must bear because he says, **"Cast thy burden upon the Lord..."** However, in the very next breath we find the comfort and the strength that we need while carrying our burdens: **"...and He shall sustain thee."**

We know that the Psalmist is speaking of the saved, because he says (of God), **"...He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."** So, it seems that those who would live their lives in a righteous fashion, shall have a burden to bear, but the Lord will sustain us as we cast that burden upon Him.

Additionally, the future is confirmed and certain, for those who are given unto Him, because the Lord God will not allow them to be moved or taken away from Him. We trust in God to save us, and we trust in God to keep us.

I hope it is not your own righteousness that you are trusting in today; but rather the righteousness that is found in Jesus Christ. **"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,**

And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3:8-9). We cannot save ourselves. We are sinners, and we have no righteousness with which to justify ourselves before God. We, as sinners, must repent of our sins and trust in Jesus Christ to save us. He will pay the price for our sins, and He will give us of His righteousness and present us before God the Father as justified saints of God.

It is a pleasant thought, and very comforting to our souls, to know that, while the world and this present age continues, our salvation is sure and certain because it rests not in ourselves or in the power of any man, but in the person and the work and the righteousness of Jesus Christ.



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flows in the New Jerusalem. Psalm 46:4 says: **"There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the most High."**

I hasten to say that none shall enter the New Jerusalem and drink of the waters of life unless they in this life come to Christ for salvation. Our Lord said in John 7:37: **"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."** He told the woman of Samaria: **"If thou knewest the gift of**

God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water" (John 4:10). He then added: **"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life"** (John 4:13-14). The Prophet Isaiah wrote: **"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price"** (Isa. 55:1). It is only after one comes to Christ for salvation that he can say with the Spirit, the bride, and the gospel hearer to Christ who now sits in Heaven, **"Come."**

THE THIRSTY ARE INVITED

This verse does not teach that every member of Adam's race has a natural thirst for the water of life. When the Holy Spirit does a work of grace upon the soul, that soul has a burning and a parched sense of want---a deep sense of misery, dissatisfaction, and disquiet---created by a departure from the living God. There is nothing in the universe that can satisfy a thirsty soul but Jesus Christ, the Water of Life. Such a soul cries out: **"Sir, give me this water that I thirst not"** (John 4:15).

The first class of persons who come to Christ and partake of the water of life is the thirsty. The Holy Spirit convinces some of sin, and they thirst for pardon and purity. You may expect to hear them say: **"My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is"** (Ps. 63:1). Others

may exclaim: **"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"** (Ps. 42:2). Those who drink of these waters thirst for more of them. They never want "more" than Christ, but they often want more "of" Christ. What water is to the thirsty body, Christ is much more to the craving of a thirsty soul.

Not the righteous or the learned, but the thirsty are invited to come to Christ. He who feels his need and whose soul longs for satisfaction, let him come. The invitation is one of mercy, and therefore it is to the needy. Those invited by Christ to come are those who thirst after His grace and righteousness. Our Savior said: **"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled"** (Matt. 5:6). He who comes will then thirst after His second coming and in the New Jerusalem state.

THE WILLING ARE INVITED

Arminians use Revelation 22:17 to teach that every man has a natural will to come to Christ if he wants to do so. Instead of making this an invitation to the willing as it is, they make it say that whosoever will not can come if he wants to do so. The Arminian fails to see that the verse speaks of **"whosoever will,"** not "whosoever will not." Not all men have the will to come to Christ: **"And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life"** (John 5:40). No person can come to Christ unless he is drawn by the effectual working of the God of all grace: **"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day"** (John 6:44).

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Whenever the word "whosoever" is used it is always restricted by the verse. Note a few verses. **"Whosoever will come after me"** (Mark 8:34). **"Whosoever shall receive me"** (Mark 9:37). **"Whosoever shall confess me"** (Luke 12:8). **"Whosoever believeth in him"** (John 3:16). **"Whosoever believeth in him"** (Acts 10:43). **"Whosoever believeth on him"** (Rom. 9:33; 10:11). **"Whosoever that believeth that Jesus is the Christ"** (I John 5:1). The word "whosoever" must not be twisted to mean every one without exception. If you think it has that meaning try such a meaning in the following verses. **"Whosoever receiveth the mark of his name"** (Rev. 14:11). Will all take the name of Antichrist? **"Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire"** (Rev. 20:15). Does this mean that all without exception will be cast into the lake of fire? **"Whosoever loveth and maketh a life"** (Rev. 22:15). Is this true of all men without exception?

The invitation in Revelation 22:17 is not to whosoever will not, but to **"whosoever will."** This is a very broad invitation. If you are willing to partake of the Water of Life, then Christ is willing to give it to you, so come and drink. If you honestly can say, "Lord, I am willing to be saved and give up my sins," then come and drink. The Devil may tell you: "You are too young." "You are too old." "You are too bad." "You are too late." When he does this hurl back at him, **"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."** None are shut out but those whose stubborn will keep them out.

"FREELY"

The Greek word (*dorean*) which is translated **"freely"** means "gratuitously, without a cause in us why it should be given" (John 15:25; Rom. 3:24). The blessings of salvation are **"without money and without price"** (Isa. 55:1). The first drop of the living water for which the thirsty soul applies is freely given (John 4:10). Then every day he comes to Christ for more and more. The person made willing to come in the day of the Lord's power (Ps. 110:3) lives on free grace below, and this same free grace will carry him home to the New Jerusalem and the river of life.

CONCLUSION

1. Let us not clog the gospel with a thousand conditions so as to discourage seeking souls. If a sinner is athirst, then stand not in his way. Let him drink freely of the Water of Life. The words **"let him come"** speaks of the sinner's responsibility to respond to the gospel. May none stand in his way if Christ bids him to come. Let him come running, falling, stumbling, but let him come. Yea, if he really thirsts for Christ, wild horses cannot keep him away. Let him come with great haste. Look at the simple conditions: **"And let him. . . come. . . let him take the water of life freely."** It is not, "Let him make," but **"Let him take."**

2. As a part of the Lord's bride, let us shout to the highest hills, **"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."** Let those who have believed the Gospel and are outside of the church say, **"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."** Let the lost sinner come to Christ for salvation and to His bride for church membership, and then let him join with all in saying: **"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."**



GLEANING



The Sinner Appealed To

By James Smith
(1802 - 1862)

"When will ye be wise" (Ps. 94:8)?

In what does true wisdom consist? In hearkening to counsel (Prov. 12:5), the counsel of the wise, the experienced, and the holy; but especially in hearkening to the counsel of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who counsels us to procure from Him wealth, raiment, and wisdom, which last for ever (Rev. 3:18). In gathering in summer, and so providing for winter which is approaching (Prov. 10:5). In the summer of youth, we should provide for the winter of age; and in the summer of life, for the winter of death. Now we are surrounded by the means of salvation; now we are hailed by the inviting voice of the Saviour, saying, **"Seek ye me, and ye shall live;"** and now we are encouraged by the gracious assurance, "Every one that seeketh findeth." Wisdom consists in obtaining salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, for which purpose the Holy Scriptures are given us, which are able to make us **"wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus"** (II Tim. 3:15). In a word, it is our wisdom to avoid misery, disgrace, and death; and to secure the greatest happiness, honour, and everlasting safety.

But what folly is generally displayed! Men take the course which must secure misery, disgrace, and destruction. Is

this wisdom, or is it folly? **"The wages of sin is death."** **"The way of transgressors is hard."** Is it wisdom to slight the warnings of mercy, which are given that we may avoid the snare, escape the pit, and obtain invaluable blessings? Is it wisdom to excuse ourselves from sitting down at the gospel feast when invited to partake of the benevolence of God, and feed on the bread which endureth to everlasting life? Is it wisdom to reject the Word of the Lord, which counsels us in kindness, and sets before us the way of life and the way of death? Is it wisdom to trifle, with death at our elbow, judgment in prospect, and hell or Heaven but a short distance before us? It is not, it cannot be wise to do so. Was Cain wise, who slew his brother, went out from the presence of the Lord, ruined his own soul, and entailed a curse on his posterity? Was Esau wise, who for a morsel of meat sold his birthright? ---for ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. Was Achan wise, who for a wedge of gold and a Babylonish garment ruined himself and his family? Was Judas wise, who for gain sold his Master, and went to his own place? Ah! if you could hear their groans, their lamentations, their self-reproaches, you would not, you could not say that they were wise. But are you wise? or do you follow their pernicious ways? Do you believe in Jesus? Are you united with the saints? Will you NOW consecrate yourself to the Lord?

WHEN will you be wise? You have, perhaps, heard the gospel, you have sometimes felt something of its power, you have

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Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of
Plant City, Florida



SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON - BIBLE SURVEY #21 THE BOOK OF I SAMUEL

TEXT: I Samuel 8:1-22

DEVOTIONAL READING: Matthew 27:1-66; John 19:15

AIM: Over-View of the Book of I Samuel

SUGGESTED HYMN: *Trust and Obey*

INTRODUCTION: We now look at the 9th book of the Bible; the fourth in the historical section: I Samuel. Originally, I Samuel and II Samuel were one book. When translated into the Greek and English they were separated into two books. In this book, we see Christ presented as prophet (in Samuel), priest (in the faithful priest), and king (David).

THEME: Obedience to God's Word. Over and over we see God speaking concerning faithfulness to His Word (I Sam. 2:35; I Sam. 13:14; I Sam. 15:22-23).

I. AUTHOR: Unknown, possibly Samuel with Gad and Nathan. It is the first of the "writing prophets".

II. KEY CONCEPTS:

1. A Faithful Priest Proclaimed: I Sam. 2:35—Eli had been unfaithful. He allowed his sons to profane the sacrifices unto the Lord so that the people abhorred the offering of the Lord. As priest, Eli was to be a religious leader. Yet, his own house was a mess. God would one day raise up a faithful priest who would do according to all His Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, our faithful High Priest (Heb. 2:17).

2. Rejection of God as King: I Sam. 8:4-7—Israel's desire was not in accordance with God's will. It was clear that the Lord was to be their King. Israel, however, desired to be like the nations. So, too, would the nation of Israel reject her King when He came to this earth (John 19:15).

3. King would represent the people before God: The king was less political and more "religious". While the God of Israel continues to be the true King of Israel, the earthly king would represent the nation before God and would be ultimately responsible to Him (Deut. 17:14-20).

A. Success of the king: The success of the king and the kingdom was clearly to be based upon obedience to God, His law, and revealed will (I Sam. 15:22-23). Thus, we see the kingdom taken from Saul for his defiance and rebellion towards the Lord and His Word (I Sam. 15:23, 27-28).

a. Obedience v. Disobedience: This is still the measure today of success in the eyes of the Lord. Either one will be obedient or disobedient. Further, do we not see Christ the Savior in this? For is He not the obedient King who stands before the Lord God in representation of us, His people?

4. The Role of the Prophets: I Sam. 8:7; I Sam. 15:15,16—What is a

prophet? A prophet is one who is a teller forth of truth, a messenger of God (E.G. "Aaron...shall be thy prophet" Ex. 7:1-2, Aaron was Moses' mouth-piece. The prophet is God's mouth-piece). The prophet is to tell what God says. Here, the prophet was to be God's mouth-piece in the ear of the king that the worship of God would be maintained and thus all of the life of Israel would be blessed. We must remember, as the "religious life" goes, so, too, would the farming, rain, economy (Deut. 28).

A. Christ our Lord: Do we not see Christ Jesus here as God's mouth-piece (Heb. 1:1-3)? Do we not see Christ Jesus declaring God's Word at all costs (John 8:38)? So too let God's men, His church declare His Word in like manner.

5. God Sees Not As Man Sees: I Sam. 16:7—This is a great principle that God's people must understand. God sees not things as we see them. He looks upon the heart, not the outside. This is true in every sense (I Peter 3:4; Col. 3:23-25; Isa. 52:14; Isa. 53:2).

III. KEY PERSON(S):

1. Samuel—Name means "asked of God". The Judge/Prophet of God—Type of Jesus, He was devoted unto the Lord before his birth (I Sam. 1:10-11).

2. Saul—Israel's 1st king. Rebelled in disobedience to God.

3. David—Israel's 2nd king. One after the heart of God (I Sam. 13:14). Type of the Lord Jesus.

4. God—The True King of Israel. Rejected by His people to be like the nations.

5. Jonathon—faithful friend of King David, son of Saul. Typical of the faithful child of God.

6. Israel—desired a king to be like the nations (I Sam. 8:5,19-20).

IV. OUTLINE:

1. The Birth and Call of Samuel—Chapters 1-3

2. The Loss of the Ark of the Covenant—Chapters 4-7

3. The Call of Saul To Be King—Chapters 8-12

4. The Rejection of Saul as King—Chapters 13-15

5. The Persecution of David by Saul—Chapters 16-26

6. The Lapse of David's Faith—Chapters 27, 28

7. The Restoration of David thru Faith—Chapters 29-30

8. The Close of Saul's Life—Chapters 28 & 31

V. CLOSING: The book of I Samuel is a transition from the judicial period of Israel to her kingly time. Yet, God is still on His throne. Thus, they were still His people, and were still to be obedient unto Him. This has been the theme since the beginning, in the garden with Adam: trust and obey God vs. suspect and disobey the Lord. For the sinner, there is one who has kept God's Word on one's behalf: the Lord Jesus. Believe and thou shalt be saved. Child of God walk in His footsteps.

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



Gleanings

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promised at some future time to attend to it, you have postponed it again and again, you have delayed until NOW. Surely you are foolish, you are in the greatest danger, you are totally inexcusable. When will you be wise? Are you now young? Youth is the time to incline the ear unto wisdom, and apply the heart unto understanding; to cry after knowledge, and lift up the voice for understanding; to seek for her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures; then you shall understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. **“For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding”** (Prov. 2:2-6). If you are not wise in youth, it is probable you never will be. Few become wise when settled down in life, and fewer still in old age. My young friend, look at the gay young man on his dying pillow, hear his dying regrets, mark his gloomy end; was he wise? Look for one moment at the state and condition of lost souls; were they wise? Now pause, solemnly pause, and listen: God asks you from His throne, “When will you be wise?” Jesus asks you from His cross, “When will you be wise?” The Holy Spirit speaks to you by the Bible, and asks, “When will you be wise?” The preacher cries to you from the pulpit; he asks, “When will you be wise?” The saint from the church of God, asks you, “When will you be wise?” And angels from the upper skies, ask, “When will you be wise?” See the end of the wise; they **“shine as the brightness of the firmament”** (Dan. 12:3). See the end of the foolish; they cry, **“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved”** (Jer. 8:20).

*“Wide as the reach of Satan’s rage
Doth God’s salvation flow;
‘Tis not confined to sex or age,
The lofty or the low,*

*While grace is offered to the prince,
The poor may take their share;
No mortal has a just pretence
To perish in despair.*

*Come, all ye vilest sinners, come,
He’ll form your souls anew;
His gospel and His heart have room
For rebels such as you.*

*His doctrine is almighty love:
There’s virtue in His name
To turn the raven to a dove,
The lion to a lamb.”*



The Short Pews



Brief Articles
by Curtis Pugh
(1944 - 2018)

JOHN CALVIN AND JAMES ARMINIUS

In all probability this article will be criticized for a number of reasons. Be that as it may, it is a fact that there is a great division among those called Baptists. Sound Baptists of the historic sort are slandered as “Calvinists” as if they were disciples of that Protestant Reformer. In addition we shall present some historical information to show that John Calvin did not originate what is today called “Calvinism.” And neither did James Arminius originate what is today called “Arminianism.” (Note this: an Arminian – with an “i” – is one who believes in freewill doctrine: an Armenian – with an “e” – is one whose ethnicity sprang from

Armenia. It is easy to remember: the word spelled with an “i” has to do with “doctr-I-ne” while the word with “e” has to do with -E-tnicity. Because of those two letter differences, these words are properly pronounced slightly different one from the other.)

We ask the question: where did “Calvinism” originate? Since the Bible consistently presents God as almighty and shows Him to always act without the interference of either angels or men, we conclude that God is sovereign in everything that He does. This is the foundation for what we prefer to call the doctrine of grace rather than “Calvinism.” Nothing outside of Himself compels God to do anything. He is not obligated or bound by anything outside of Himself. The Bible contains the words elect, election, predestinate, foreknow, determinate counsel, etc. The healthy method of Bible interpretation requires us to let these words say what they say: let them mean what they mean without twisting or manipulating them into meaning less than they do. We conclude from our study of the Bible that God chose whom He would save before the foundation of the world and that He is accomplishing His perfect will.

We came to these conclusions apart from ever reading the writings of Calvin or any other man. The Bible says, for example: **“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the**

beloved” (Ephesians 1:4-6). And again, **“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began”** (II Timothy 1:9). It ought to be a matter of historical interest to sound Baptists today that one group of our anabaptist forefathers was given the name “Paulician.” Our enemies today try to say that the Paulicians were so named after an early Armenian (note the “e”) bishop. However, Gibbon in his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, liv), says it means “Disciples of St. Paul.” We think it is obvious that not only Paul but all the apostles believed in the sovereignty of God in election, predestination, etc.

Another proof that John Calvin did not originate that which is called “Calvinism” today is this: Augustine of Hippo (sometimes called Saint Augustine) wrote and preached these things before John Calvin was even born. Perhaps you have read Spurgeon’s comment concerning Augustine preaching sovereign grace doctrine. Note that Augustine was born November 13, 354 and died August 28, 430 – long before John Calvin: Calvin born July 10, 1509 and died May 27, 1564. His birth was, therefore, 1,155 years after the birth of Augustine. So it is ignorance to claim that John Calvin originated the doctrine of grace. It should also be noted that while Calvin did teach sovereign grace doctrine, he also taught baptismal regeneration and also that the sword should exercise its power over those who disagreed with his doctrine. He was, of course, a Protestant Reformer. What that really means is that he was once a part of the Roman

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The Short Pews

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Harlot and had a great part in giving birth to her daughters, for Rome is **“The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth”** (Revelation 17:5). This preacher is not aware of anything good that came out of the Protestant Reformation. It is, first of all, a fact that a reformation is not possible. Proof: **“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one”** (Job 14:4). The second fact is this: no “reformation” was needed. There were anabaptist congregations in existence in most of the countries of Europe. Had the “Reformers” really desired to leave the Harlot, they could have made a clean break with her and sought membership with one of the Lord’s congregations. But they kept Harlot baptism, Harlot church government, Harlot church state compromises, and actively persecuted anabaptists and other dissenting groups.

Now let us consider James Arminius and Arminianism (note the “i”). It may be a surprise to some to hear that John Calvin never heard of James Arminius nor of Arminianism. These two never had an argument nor did they ever meet. Calvin lived a short time in France, but spent most of his life in Switzerland dying there on May 27, 1564. James Arminius was a Dutchman who lived in Holland. He was born there on October 10, 1560. A little math shows that Arminius was only four years old when Calvin died. Thus there was no interchange, correspondence or communication between the two.

What is Arminianism and how did this system of doctrine come about? First of all, it should be understood that just

as there were men who preached sovereign grace before Calvin, so there were people who preached freewill doctrine before Arminius. In fact, a Dominican friar named Thomas Aquinas, a Catholic theologian, was the father of Roman Catholic freewill teaching. He lived from A. D. 1225 until March 7, 1274. So Aquinas lived and died before either Calvin or Arminius. He opposed the sovereignty of God teachings of Augustine and his doctrine became the basic doctrine of the Catholics. It is called “Thomism.” Again, it is obvious that Thomas Aquinas, Calvin and Arminius were not contemporaries, and never had any personal meetings or confrontations.

James Arminius began his professorship at the Dutch University of Leiden in 1603. Remember, Calvin had died in 1564. In the years following Calvin’s death, a Dutch pastor, theologian and former student of his (Calvin’s) named Guido de Bres crafted what is called the Belgic Confession. (The term Belgic then referred to not only Belgium, but all the low countries including Holland.) This Belgic Confession was the official doctrine of the Dutch Reformed Church and other “reformed churches.” The Dutch Reformed Church was the officially sanctioned state church of Holland. James Arminius died in October A. D. 1609.

After James Arminius died, his followers presented their objections regarding the Belgic Confession (Calvinism) to the Dutch government the following year. They opposed the established Calvinism and wanted to change the state church’s doctrinal position. They wanted the teachings

of James Arminius to be the official doctrine of their church. They opposed the sovereignty of God in salvation including total depravity, unconditional election, particular redemption, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints. It was these followers of Arminius who first came up with their “five points.” Their objections were presented to the Dutch government in an official document called “The Remonstrance of 1610.” These men were known as “Remonstrants.” In response to this Remonstrance of 1610, the Dutch government ordered a synod – an official gathering of church leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church and eight other reformed bodies. (No Baptists or anabaptists were present.) It was not until November 13, 1618 – about 8 years later - that the first meeting of the Synod of Dort was held. (Dort is another name for Dordrecht, the city where the synod was held.) These Reformed church leaders held 154 meetings, the last on May 9, 1619. In these meetings the Synod of Dort crafted “the five points of Calvinism” in response to Arminius’s teachings. John Calvin did not formulate the famous “five points” that today bear his name. Additionally you cannot find anything like the familiar “TULIP” in any of Calvin’s writings. The “five points of Calvinism” were a response to the “five points” of the Dutch Remonstrants who were disciples of James Arminius.

Considering these facts, and the fact that sound Baptists today reject Calvin’s doctrine of baptismal regeneration and other aberrations, why are they slandered by the name “Calvinist?” A multitude of freewill

♦ (Continued on page 24)

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report

2-1-2021 to 2-28-2021

Beginning Balance	\$997.90
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	200.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Carol Willett, Cottonwood Shores, TX	75.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Davenport B. C., Davenport, WA	168.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
The Lord’s B. C., Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	35.00
Mt Pleasant B. C., Cheapeake, OH	200.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
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	52.00
Anonymous	2,750.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Sub Total	\$4,797.50
TOTAL	\$5,795.40
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	490.00
Postage	572.21
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Dividing checks	150.00
Bank charge	13.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,701.17
ENDING BALANCE	\$2,094.23



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report

2-1-2021 to 2-28-2021

Beginning Balance	\$3,188.70
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Calvary I. B. C., Sumas, WA	100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
.....	525.00
TOTAL	3,713.70
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio time	403.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	403.98
.....	3,309.72
Interest	+0.02
ENDING BALANCE	\$3,309.74

The Short Pews

(Continued from page 23) ♦

Baptists in various manmade organizations have never heard of James Arminius. But they have heard their preachers make ignorant and untrue statements about “Calvinism.” They have heard sovereign grace Baptists slandered and maligned. They have been taught that “Calvinism” is a horrible system of doctrine. They have not been told that what today is called “Calvinism” is the doctrine of the old Baptists because it is the doctrine of the Bible.

We think we can conclude this little article with no better words than those of Charles Haddon Spurgeon who said: “I have my own private opinion that there is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else. I do not believe we can preach the gospel, if we do not preach justification by faith, without works; nor unless we preach the sovereignty of God in His dispensation of grace; nor unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable, conquering love of Jehovah; nor do I think we can preach the gospel, unless we base it upon the special and particular redemption of His elect and chosen people which Christ wrought out upon the cross; nor can I comprehend a gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called, and suffers the children of God to be burned in the fires of damnation after having once believed in Jesus.” We can only add: Amen! (Spurgeon’s quote from: *A Defense of Calvinism.*)



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS, and Pastor Joseph Sidders would like to announce their annual Spring fellowship meeting Saturday, April 10th and Sunday April 11th. Service times are at 10:00 a.m. Scheduled speakers are Elders Matthew Stepp and Joe Newell. All are invited to attend.

The Faith Baptist Church, 3692 Hunteartown Road, Versailles, KY. 40383, and Pastor Joe Collins would like to announce their upcoming Bible Conference on April 14th -16th. Service times start at 7:00 p.m. All are invited. For more information contact 859-873-2263.

The Beauty Mountain Baptist Church of Edmond, WV, and Pastor Jonathan Bailess would like to announce a revival meeting from May 3rd -7th. Service times are at 7:00 p.m. each night. Elder Clint Keith from Monticello Kentucky will be the speaker. All are invited to attend.

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.

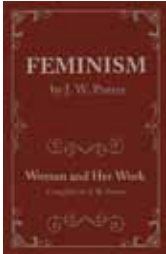
The Stephens Branch Baptist Church of Martin, Kentucky is in need of a pastor. They are an Independent, Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Missionary Baptist church holding to the doctrines of grace and the King James Bible. If you are interested in being considered or would like more information on the church 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 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

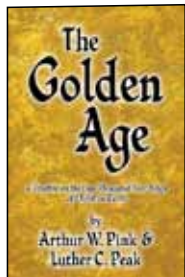
Brother Darin Wiley 620-863-2431.

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.

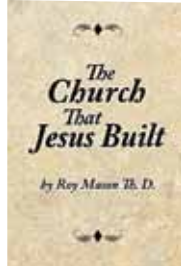


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