

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

Should Christians Use The Peace Symbol?

By Isaiah Green of Sovereign Grace BC - Hortense GA.

Firstly, allow me to define the peace symbol, this is the definition of it: "A figure representing peace, in the form of a circle with one line bisecting it from top to bottom and two shorter lines radiating downward on either side" (As defined by Oxford Languages).

The Bible does not specifically mention the peace symbol; however, as Christians we must



ask the following questions before we participate in this: 1) Are you using the peace sign to the glory of God (Colossians 3:17)? 2) Are you using it in the name of the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:17)? 3) Would it cause a brother to stumble (Romans 14:13; 1 Corinthians 8:9-13; 10:28-32)? 4) Are you in good conscience

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Who Is God?

By Wm. Doyal Thomas (1932 - 2018)

It seems sad that such a question would ever be asked. Yet, there are multiplied millions of people who do not know who God is. And they make no pretense about knowing, and seem to be unconcerned and uncaring.

There are other millions who imagine a god, and then seek to be identified with their imagined god. The number of these imagined gods is unknown, for it seems



that everywhere you look there is a new god who suddenly appears on the scene to lead the unknowing into another false way.

But Who "is" God?

Is God the imagined god of men? And if so, which of the many is the authentic? It is obvious that all the many cannot be the real - for there are many, and each is

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Love Your Church

By Glenn Gilbreath of Decatur, Alabama

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter (small pebble), and upon this rock (massive rock) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). I recently wrote an article for the Berea Baptist Banner entitled "Love your Pastor," showing us the need to support, encourage, follow and yes, love



the pastor of the church in which we are blessed to be members. This article is to instruct us how and why we should love the church. Love your church.

To begin this discussion, we must determine what a church is. Another name is "ecclesia," which means a congregation or an assembly. In his book *The Church That Jesus Built*, Brother Roy Mason gave a very good description as: "A congregation of baptized believers associated together in the fellowship of

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Follow These Things, That You May Fight The Good Fight

By John R. Lenegar (1942-2006)

"But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good faith of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (I Tim. 6:11-12).

Paul tells Timothy and us that we are to fight a good fight during our Christian sojourn here on earth. He is talking about living and dealing with all that



surrounds us in our day-to-day life as God's elect children. Our mindsets, our goals, our attitudes, and our actions are each one

important toward our living and reacting to all that is around us here on earth. Paul tells us to follow certain things, six to be exact, which we need to perfect and continually pursue as we fight the good fight of faith. The fight, of course, is against all that

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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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Who Is God?

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thought to be the real by someone. Everyone most surely is thinking that his is the real.

The imagined god of man cannot be God. Whichever god comes into man's depraved and darkened mind cannot be God. All the gods of man's imagination cannot be God, for they all are weak and deficient. Weak in ability and deficient in wisdom. They cannot be God.

The One God has this complaint against man, "...thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself..." (Psa. 50:21). Of course, God is here speaking to Israel as representative people. And here is God's assessment of the situation: "Thou thoughtest". That is awesome. That man thought (imagined) that the true God was just another like himself states the case correctly. But regardless of man's rationalizations about God and about himself, God has plainly declared the truth. Let man therefore take note, and quibble not at God's evaluation.

Man imagines a god. And man's god is like himself - initially. And then this imagined god takes on other forms in descending order until this god becomes in the mind of man something to hold in utter contempt. Not at all to be feared or held in high esteem. Laughable in weakness and scorned for lack of knowledge and wisdom.

Is it any wonder that man acts as he does? His god can do nothing for him, nor hold him in any way accountable. His god is not to be worshipped and praised. His god is to be ruled over and put to open shame. Is it any wonder that man continues on in his sin?

Have you ever heard someone refer to God as "the man upstairs"?

Have you? Come now - have you not? Shame upon you, and upon me, for our blasphemous thoughts and declarations concerning God and His Being.

Please turn to the book of Romans and read chapters 1, 2, and 3. Here, you will find a sweeping indictment that God has pronounced against sinful, fallen man. Read it in awe. Read it in great fear and trembling. Read again and again chapter 1, verse 21 thru 23. **"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."**

How awful are the imaginations of sinful man. How dark is the darkness of the foolish heart of fallen man. How degrading and dishonoring are the evil thoughts of the totally depraved mind and heart against the Very God. **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"** (Jer. 17:9).

An examination of Romans 1:21-23 will reveal the wickedness of the thoughts of fallen man toward and about God.

First, sinful man changes (in his own mind) the glory of the uncorruptible God, and begins to make images of what he thinks God to be. And his first effort produces an image of his supposed god to be "like himself".

Man places his god on a level with himself so that he can now deal with his god on the basis of their equality. Eyeball-to-eyeball, using human language. And that

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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).



Keep The Lord's Name Holy!

"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Deut. 5:11).

Let us start with this question, what does it mean to take the name of the Lord in vain? The Greek word "shav" simply means – using God's name in the sense of desolating. This means not to use God's name "depressingly empty or bare." A.H. Strong's also adds these definitions, such as evil (as destructive), literally (ruin) or morally (especially guile); figuratively idolatry (as false, subjectively), uselessness (as deceptive, objectively; also, adverbially in vain): false (-ly), lie, lying, vain, and in vanity. God also tells us that using God's name in vain is heathenistic, **"For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain"** (Psa. 139:20). Therefore, we must conclude that at the very least it is a sin to use God's name in a lesser way than holy, in majesty, in the highest form of reverence, or righteous way.

God said, **"He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name"** (Psa. 111:9). The word **"reverend"** means to fear; or to morally revere – we all know what it is to fear, but what does it mean to "revere," it means - to feel deep respect or admiration for His name. Therefore, let us

define what is meant by using God's name in vain, to show little respect for it, to have little or no fear of God, or not to have enough respect for His name to use it only in a Holy way. God reminds us of this about Him, **"Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion"** (Psa. 111:1-4). I believe that the most degrading and despicable thing a Christian can do is use God's name in a vain way of any sort. God's name, and this is any name referring to God, the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit is always only to be used in a Holy and Reverential way. I know that sometimes Christians have a slip, or sometimes maybe ignorance is the reason for using His name in a vain way, but if you read this article or any like it, then you are without excuse and responsible to God.

God is Holy and God should be revered or feared, therefore it is awful and unholy to belittle God's name in any way. God is loving, merciful, and gracious to every single soul that is saved and to use His blessed name with any sort of vainness is unrighteous. One writer said, "The 'Name of God'

meant much more than the mere breathing of an articulate word by which men spoke of Him. It meant God in His reality, in His immanence, in His eternity. To take His name in vain — that is, to no purpose — is to trifle with omnipotence; it is to treat Him as though He were not. Thou takest His name in vain when thou triest to forget or ignore Him, to live without Him, more defiant than the very devils, to believe yet not to tremble." I must agree, to take God's name in vain is to belittle God and treat His blessed name as though it is meaningless. Whenever a Christian uses God's name in an unholy and vain way it is dishonorable to His glory, and everything we speak about our Father, His Son, or His Spirit should only be to edify His glory. Just as Christians speak of each other, never should a Christian belittle or dishonor another believer in Jesus Christ.

God said, **"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another"** (Rom. 14:19). God is our Father and Jesus is our Saviour and God controls all, therefore it is disgraceful and disrespectful for anyone who belongs to God to misuse His Blessed Name. God said in I Corinthians 12:3, **"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."** This word "accursed" means to take the name of Jesus useless or to think of His works as useless. To do this is like taking God's Name as useless as using it in vain. We must also consider "To take" the Name of God, any Name of God, or "to take it up" that is, to use it in any way which

may be done either by speaking to Him, of Him, for Him, or against Him. Therefore, this covers a very wide area of our usage. We are not allowed to use God's Name in a false sense, but we are also forbidden to falsely swear by it or use it in a false statement or a profane way.

False teaching for God breaks His law; our teaching must be the truth because God's Word is only the truth. God's Name is only glorified in Truth, **"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"** John 4:23-24. This is done by declaring God's Truth in His Word, and teaching lies or what He has not said, is to preach lies in God's Holy Name. It is because they are denying what God has said, which is absolute truth. God explains this in I John 5:9-11 **"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."** That is, they are calling God a liar and teaching false doctrine in His Name, God is only the truth, and anything less is a lie, using God's Holy Name in a lie. Whenever any servant for God gives his own thoughts as if they were God's message, he is taking the Name of God in vain. Or if a man, while professing to speak for God, is speaking with the desire

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is bad! That is awful! That is, to be sure, exceeding sinful!

Next, not being satisfied with such a god, man makes an image of his god like the fowl of the air. The fowl of the air being a level of created being lower than man, man now ascends to a position above his god. Here, as before, his god is just another creature, like himself, and not the Creator at all. And the case worsens. There is an increasing contempt on the part of man toward God.

Then, man sinks lower in his imaginations and makes unto himself an image of his god like the four-footed beasts. Lower than man. Lower than the fowl of the air. Now man's god is more and more disregarded. Man now has less reason in his depraved mind to heed his god than before. And he loves to have it so. He gloats of his position of supremacy over his god. He is now superior to his god. And who serves whom in this case?

Finally, man makes unto himself an image of his god like the creeping things. The creeping things are less honorable than the created beings above their level. The creeping things are generally held in utter contempt and are to be trodden under the foot of man at will. To be shunned without shame and disregard in entirety. This is depravity at work! For now, the god of man is walked over with no thought whatsoever.

As you read again Romans, chapters 1, 2, and 3, you will find in chapter 3 a detailed account of God's indictment against the descendants of Adam. Read chapter 3, verses 10-23. Take note of this pronouncement - **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God..."**

Who "is" God?

Let us look to Holy Writ. Let us hear God as He declares Himself to be God Alone. **"Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God"** (Psa. 50:7).

"I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else" (Isa. 45:5-6).

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa. 46:9-10).

"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Ex. 3:14).

Now, after all these clear declarations, by God Himself as to who He is, how can anyone fail in knowing Him?

The answer: Except God "open the heart," none can find out God. He reveals Himself to whomsoever He pleases, as in the case of Lydia (Acts 16:14).

Because his heart is darkened by sin, man cannot know God, nor can he discern spiritual things. Man's **"foolish heart was darkened"** (Rom. 1:21), so that he cannot know God. Sin has ruined man so that he cannot know the God who created him. He is separated from his Creator. Thus a state of spiritual death exists. **"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are**

foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14).

Who "is" God?

He is the Maker and Creator of all things, and by Him all things consist. There is nothing that is made that was not made by Him. Think of it. Consider the implications.

And when He created, who was there to counsel with Him as to "reasonable procedure to follow"? Who was there to counsel with Him as to the advisability of even making a vast creation? Of celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial? Of the vast gradations of created beings? Of man? Who was there?

"Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou has understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who has stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof?" (Job 38:4-6). Please read all of Job 38, and pay particular attention to the times when God challenges His creatures to **"declare if thou knowest"**.

In this vast creation that God has fashioned, is it not evident that He has determined all things that ever shall be? Is it not evident? Is it not?

Do the celestial orbs follow random wanderings? Or do they not traverse the vast reaches of unknown space in precise, exact, and predictable movements? Is there chaotic and senseless turmoil in their revolutions about other bodies that collectively form the universe? Does each follow its own will or purpose, apart from the exactness of Omniscient Wisdom's prescription? Does not

the path of each meld into the perfectness of the whole? Declare - if thou knowest!

And what about those creatures that God has placed upon this one celestial body, His created earth?

Are all His creatures the same as all others? Is there not here also the clearly manifested evidence that God has purposed and willed to bring into existence multiplied missions of creatures, each species being created uniquely different from the others?

Cats there are many. Variations abound as to breeds, colors, sizes, etc., within the species. Yet, cats are not rats, nor are they dogs, nor are they fowl of the air, nor fish of the sea. They are cats, and they will continue to be cats according to God's promise, each producing **"after his own kind"**, and it will not change by evolutionary process - regardless of the lies of Satan and man. **"And GOD SAID, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good"** (Gen. 1:24-25) (emph. DT).

And what about the times and seasons? Are they not all under the direct supervision of the Absolute Sovereign? Does day follow night? Are there seed times and times of harvest? Is there a time to be born and a time to die? Is there?

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal;

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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).

From A Broken Home

Not everyone has a great childhood. Some children grow up in terrible situations, and it is a wonder they made it out of childhood at all. Once, a young boy named Josiah had a lousy home life. His father, though wealthy, was an evil man. He was a practitioner of the dark arts, worshipping devil gods in perverse ways. He was only 16 years old when Josiah was born. Eight years later, villains murdered Josiah's dad in their own house. Losing a parent is hard at any age, but for a son to lose his dad at the age of eight, and to murderous hands, would be particularly hard on the young man. How is his life going to turn out? He might have followed in his father's footsteps and to honor him, become like him. Another course would be for Josiah to become bitter and hardhearted. The world was against him. Everything is always falling apart for him. Nothing ever goes his way.

Josiah was the eight-year-old king of Judah. Does that make a difference? He was actually in more danger of turning out just as rotten as his dad. It is not very often that celebrity children grow up well adjusted. Childhood actors and actresses rarely make it to adulthood without a mental and emotional collapse. They are taken advantage of, used, abused, stolen from, and by the time they reach adulthood, many are broken inside and out. King Josiah was not just a famous kid – he was the king. How much more would the flatterers and politicians try to get

their hooks in him?

By God's grace, not only did Josiah turn out ok, but he was also second to none when it came to the kings of Judah, **"And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him"** (II Kings 23:25). There was not a more godly king who sat on the throne than Josiah. He began to seek the Lord at an early age. When Josiah turned 16, he began a series of reforms that changed the face of the nation. Josiah did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and rather than following in his dad's footsteps, he followed in king David's. He was not bitter and hardhearted but had a tender heart and humbled himself before the Lord, **"Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD"** (II Kings 22:19). Josiah's submission to the Word of God, his tender heart to receive the truth, and his humble heart to confess his sin before God made him one of the great men of history.

God's grace took a boy from a home, grounded in wickedness, disordered in idolatry, and broken in a tragedy and saved him from the curse of a bad family life. God's

grace is sufficient, powerful, and life-changing. Do not excuse your sins by your upbringing. There is grace, forgiveness, and a new life in Christ.

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



Peace Symbol

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while using it (Romans 14:14-23)? 5) Does it appear to be unclean (Romans 14:14)? If you have answered questions 1, 2, and 4 with the answer "no" then you shouldn't use the symbol. If question 3 and 5 is "yes" than you shouldn't use the symbol.

Let us understand the roots of the peace symbol: "The modern peace sign was designed by Gerald Holtom for the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in 1958. The vertical line in the center supposedly represents the flag semaphore signal for the letter D, and the downward lines on either side represent the semaphore signal for the letter N. "N" and "D", for nuclear disarmament, enclosed in a circle. Holtom also described the symbol as representing despair, with the central lines forming a human with its hands questioning at its sides against the backdrop of a white Earth" (britannica.com).

Not shortly after a year, the peace sign was adopted by a group called the "hippies" who are rebellious, often have tattoos, men have long hair, stand for free love, are against the Vietnam war, stand for sodomy, and want illegal drugs. There are even peace symbols that say "dedicated to hippies." They are clearly evil

people.

There has been controversy over whether Gerald used the German "death rune." While there is no exact proof he did, the German death rune and the peace symbol look nearly identical. This is info I found on the death rune (reportingradicalisim.org): "The "death rune" is also known as a variation of the Algiz or "life rune." Origin: This rune is the fifteenth letter of the Futhark runic alphabet, an ancient Germanic script mostly found in Scandinavia and the British Isles (in another version of the Futhark alphabet, it appears as the sixteenth rune). It is written as an inverted version of the Algiz rune, otherwise known as the "life rune." Modern neo-pagans who have no connection to Nazism or other communists ideologies also use it. Guido von List, an Austrian occultist in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century, who had a major influence on the development of occultism within Nazism, founded an esoteric, occult ideological movement called Armanism. Von List included an inverted "life rune" in his version of the Futhark alphabet, which he called the "death rune." In Nazi Germany, this rune (Von List) symbolized death. It was used to glorify fallen members of the paramilitary organization the SS (the Schutzstaffeln) and replaced the Christian cross in obituaries and on tombstones."

I want to advise all my readers to search for the German death rune on the internet. "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). As a Christian we are to abstain from appearances of evil. As we read earlier, we know it originated from the British Campaign for Nuclear

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Disarmament in 1958. It has possible roots of anti-Christian symbol (an upside-down broken “Nero-cross”), a satanic character, or even a Nazi emblem. Why would you want to be associated to it?

Do you love God? As a Christian your answer should always be “Yes.” God said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). So as Christians we should try our best to please our dear Lord (2 Corinthians 5:9; 1 John 3:22). Remember, Colossians 3:17 says that **“whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”** I Corinthians 10:31 **“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”** We are also instructed not to do anything that would cause a brother to stumble (Romans 14:13; 1 Corinthians 8:9-13; 10:28-32); and, if we cannot in good conscience participate in something, then we should not participate in that activity (Romans 14:14, 23). I Thessalonians 5:22 tells us to **“Abstain from all appearance of evil.”** And Romans 14:14 says that **“...that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.”**

Here are the reasons it is wrong to use the peace sign: 1) It is not being used in the glory of God. 2) it is not being used in the name of our Lord Jesus. 3) It would most likely cause a brother to stumble. 4) After reading all this I am not in good conscience using it. 5) It appears to be unclean to me. 6) It clearly has evil roots, it has a possible anti-Christian and

Nazism roots. 7) It's connected to the evil hippies. 8) I want to try my best to obey and please God.

Thank you for reading 'till the end, I invite you to weekly services at: 226 Willow Drive, Hortense Georgia 31543. You may contact the pastor of the church for more details at (912)-215-3144. Listen to the church sermons for free at sermonaudio.com/sgbshortense.



Love Your Church

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the gospel; that it is a spiritual democracy — visible and local or particular; that it is a New Testament institution.” We must acknowledge that it is an institution; meaning that it has foundation, organization, or body. And this institution is made up of baptized believers, saved by the grace of God, through the shed blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. The church is not the building in which these meet. It is the people themselves that make up the church. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church. Love your church.

We must also determine Who established the first church and the members thereof. **“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease”** (Matt. 9:37-38; 10:1). Jesus Christ gave His church the power to go out and heal and preach the gospel. **“Now unto him that is able to do**

exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Eph. 3:20-21). **“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all”** (Eph. 1:22-23).

Contrary to what most of the world believes today, the church was “not” established on the day of Pentecost!! I will quote two verses that will indisputably prove this point. **“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they (the church) were all with one accord in one place”** (Acts 2:1). **“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them (the church) about three thousand souls”** (Acts 2:41). The church was already in one accord on that day; and how can you add to something that does not already exist? These two verses clearly show that the first church was established before Pentecost. Love your church.

Now let us consider why we should love the church. It is where we meet with God; it is where we meet with Jesus Christ; it is where we meet with the Holy Spirit; and it is where the angels come to witness God's people as they worship and pray and sing hymns unto our Almighty God. **“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them”** (Matt. 18:20). Jesus Christ said He will be with us in His church. How can we purposely forsake the assembling of ourselves, knowing that God will be in our midst? In Acts 10:38-44, Peter is preaching to the Jews about Jesus Christ and the gospel, and in verse 44 look

at the outcome of that gospel: **“the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.”** It is the church where we can hear the gospel and see souls saved by the grace of God. The church is where we can fellowship with God's people. **“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”** (1 John 1:7). Notice that we can have fellowship with others if we walk in the light – if we follow Christ and His Word. We should love the church because Jesus Christ gave Himself for it. **“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour”** (Eph. 5:1-2). Christ gave husbands an example to follow when He said **“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it”** (Eph. 5:25). Love your church.

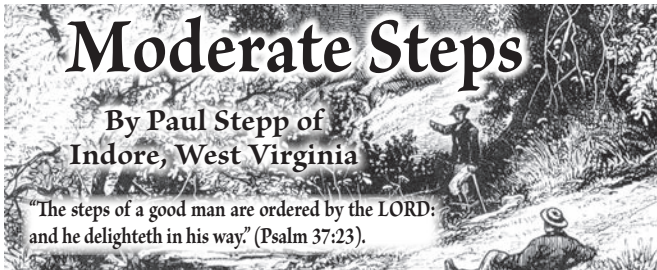
How are we to love the church? We are to follow Jesus Christ. **“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me”** (John 10:27). Follow His word – follow His example. It should be our “custom” to be in church. The word “custom” means “habit.” How many Christians make it a habit to go to church? Jesus Christ made a habit of going to the synagogue to worship. **“And he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read”** (Luke 4:16). If we abide in and live by His commandments, we cannot go wrong. **“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I**

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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).



Our Redemption Draws Nigh

Times are certainly turbulent, dangerous, and even frightening for many people in the world today. I was reading in the book of Luke, and I thought of our day and time as I read the following passage: **"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh"** (Luke 21:25-28).

The nations are **"distressed."** The people are full of **"perplexity"** – with so many ideas of what is right and what is wrong; what is true science and what is false science; what is safe public protocols and what is merely deprivations of liberties. **"Men's hearts"** are even now **"failing them for fear."**

I believe the world and the powers of darkness are using the world-wide virus to sow the seeds of panic and despair throughout the world. It is readily apparent that the vast majority of people on the earth are troubled or even consumed with the things of the flesh and the material world, while

the things of the spirit and eternal life are not of any immediate concern. As the attention of the world is directed more and more to the things of the flesh; as the world of men becomes more and more perplexed with the dangers and the fears that are all around them – wondering, "What do we do next?" With never a thought to trust in God rather than men; as men and women have their eyes more and more cast downward, to man and man's abilities and the help that comes from man; even at such a time do the people of God need, even more, to look up! The time is upon us! Our redemption draweth nigh! The return of the Lord Jesus Christ is near!

Our true hope is in Jesus Christ. I do hope and pray that men and women will turn to Him in faith and repentance. The world is not coping very well with the Covid virus. Why do you think the world can do any better when it comes to easing your guilt of sin, or of saving you from the wrath to come?

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 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. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph.

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

Love Your Church

(Continued from page 6) ♦

am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour" (John 12:26). What a blessing to be honored by God! God's people are to serve Him in His church. **"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD"** (Psa. 122:1). How glad are we really? If God's people had an opportunity to go to the house of the Lord every day of the week, how many would go? Notice what happened on the day of Pentecost after three thousand souls had been added to the church. **"And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"** (Acts 2:42). The church **"continued steadfastly"** ("constantly diligent" according to Strong's) in doctrine and in fellowship. **"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved"** (Acts 2:47). They must have been meeting every day if souls were being added on a daily basis. There was great harmony and love within the church in that day. Would it not be wonderful if the Lord's churches could see that kind of revival today? We must pray daily that we could experience that kind of love in the Lord's churches especially in today's society. Love your church.

We must show love for each

member of the church. Jesus Christ gave us a commandment to **"love one another."** **"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). He put a stipulation in His command that our love to one another is to replicate His love for us. We are to be kind to each other, to have affection for each other. We should not show favorites in the Lord's house. We all have different attitudes or feelings that may make us less affectionate or giving to one another as we ought. But that must not be in the Lord's churches. **"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another"** (Rom. 12:10). The word **"preferring"** in this verse means "to lead the way for others." God's people are to lead the way in showing love one to another. We are to show this love not only in the church, but in our families and in our communities. The love first shown us by God is to be shown unto everyone with whom we come in contact. It is our "calling," our "vocation." **"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"** (Eph. 4:1-3). Notice that as we show our love to the church and our community, we also show that peace we have in the Holy Spirit and that reflects unto others. Love your church.

Further, we show our love for the church in giving of tithes and offerings, which are just as important in showing our love for the church. If we love our church,

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The Good Fight

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is in opposition to God in this world around us. It should be our attitude to do everything as unto Him. Colossians 3:23-24 says: **“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.”**

This is of course, in opposition to the world of men who think only of “self”. To fight the good fight of faith has two major extremes. 1. The phrase has been misinterpreted by many and consequently brought about the inquisition and the deaths of millions of Baptists and others who stood for the truth unto death. There are many today who still think that they are fighting the good fight by abuse and ungodly behavior. 2. The other extreme is the one that simply ignores the good fight because they desire “their way” according to their desires, goals, and direction of their lives. God says: **“For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself”** (Gal. 6:3). God through the Psalmist points out a blessed truth and assurance for the saved. Psalm 73:24 says: **“Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.”** Unfortunately, we live in a day when change is the rule, compromise is the standard, and eternal disappointment is the result. Let us follow these things in verse eleven that we may be able to effectively fight the good fight.

I. FOLLOW - Having told Timothy and us to “flee” certain things that are detrimental to us which are covered in the preceding verses of this chapter,

he tells us now to follow certain things. These six things are for our good and growth and ultimately for God’s glory. By the way, the word “flee” means to run from; to separate yourself from; and to have nothing to do with, the things spoken in the preceding verses.

To “follow” means to pursue, to make a concerted effort, and to seriously and systematically lay hold on something. We are to be separate in following these 6 things which are greatly opposed to the world’s ways, because we are His peculiar, His special people. We cannot fellowship with the world. **“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”** (Eph. 5:11). What then should we follow after?

1. RIGHTEOUSNESS - Here we are talking about right action and practical correctness. This is based on conforming to God’s will in thinking and acting. We do the things pleasing to God as we are being transformed by the renewing of our minds. How are we motivated to practice practical righteousness? Where do we go to obtain it? We need to remember that as to salvation, Jesus has given believers His righteousness and taken our sin. He is our righteousness. I Corinthians 1:30 says: **“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”**

The practical righteousness (works and behavior) God has prepared us to do, are at His own choosing. Ephesians 2:10 tells us: **“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”** Through the power and guidance of the Holy

Spirit, through the written Word, and communion with the living Word we come to think and act as God’s children in the situations of life here on earth.

2. GODLINESS - This is the devotion to God that produces an attitude and action of life that is well pleasing to Him with Whom we have to do. Proper reverence for God, and obedience to God go hand and hand. They are a matched pair, that if separated, cause an incomplete and unbalanced situation mentally and physically as to being a Christian. We are told in Psalm 111:10, **“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.”** Even as God told ancient Israel in Deuteronomy 10:12, **“And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.”** Godliness can be great gain, but ultimately comes from and goes back to God.

3. FAITH - God gave us who are saved the faith to believe. We have a firm persuasion and a solid conviction of salvation, and the accompanying revelation from God as all that. Here we wish to emphasize “working faith”. It is a trust in God that grows stronger and stronger. How does it do that? 1. First by contemplation on the Bible, its teachings, its examples build up our faith. We need the preaching and teaching of the Word. **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”** (Rom. 10:17). 2. Secondly, by active practice of faith. Hebrews 11 is filled with the examples of outworking faith.

4. LOVE - We are speaking

here of a maturing affection for God and for man. The increase of love is a mark of perfection, or maturing. Perfect often means maturity. We need not only to love God with our total seat of affections, our total being, and our total power and ability, (Deut. 6:5), but we are to love one another with a white hot and fervent love (I Pet. 1:22). We are to love our enemies, the lost, with great compassion.

5. PATIENCE - This is a perseverance, or steadfastness that grows with the everyday Christian life. We are to “keep on keeping on”. We do not change with the times, the continual changing winds of doctrine, or circumstances of our lives. I Corinthians 15:58 reminds us: **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”** Patience is a very needful thing in Christians. James tells us it will bring us to maturity. **“But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”** It helps us to be complete.

6. MEEKNESS - God’s children need meekness, gentleness in all things. Our attitude of others, as well as our attitude about God’s Word is to be in meekness (James 1:21-22).

II. FIGHT - The struggle here is both outward and inward. It is the warfare in which every true Christian is engaged. The fact of his or her involvement proves the reality of their faith. It is the day in and day out battle against temptation and “unchristian” circumstances. We are to fight the good-fight of faith in the midst of the compromise, self-justification,

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The Good Fight

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and growing lawlessness so prevalent in our present societies. What do we fight with? Certainly not the world's instruments. We use that which God has given us. We use the very real spiritual armor of Ephesians 6:13-16. We use our sword which is the Word of God given by the Living Word of God, the Lord Jesus. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

Beloved, our mindset must be this: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man strive for the masteries, yet he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully" (II Tim. 2:4-5). Our fight is a spiritual one that is outwardly seen every day. We need to flee from sin, to follow the six things here in verse eleven, and to fight the good, worthwhile battle of faith against the wickedness of this present world. We do this, beloved, until the Lord relieves us of duty here on earth. These things will help us to be useful servants.



Heavenly Hymns

"...Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:18-20).

AFTER ALL

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"... so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thess. 4:17).

R. W. W.

Ronnie W. Wolfe (1944-)

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1. Af-ter all the path-ways have been trav-eled, Af-ter all the toils of life are done.
2. Af-ter all these heart-aches have been lift-ed, Af-ter all the pain and sor-row passed;
3. Af-ter all the rough roads in the val-ley, Af-ter all the long and nar-row path;



- | | |
|---|---|
| I will lift my prais-es un-to Heav-en, | And rest for-ev-er in His Son. |
| I will sing and praise my God for ev-er, | And think how long these bless-ings last. |
| I will rest in peace in that great cit-y, | En-joy-ing eve-ry-thing he hath. |



Af-ter all that's why He came to suf-fer. Af-ter all, that's why HE gave His Son.



Af-ter all this vale of tears is ov-er, I will live with Je-sus af-ter all.



Who Is God?

(Continued from page 4) ♡

a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace" (Eccl. 3:1-8).

Surely, there must be an Originator of all these times. And just as surely, there must be a Regulator of these same times.

Can a mere creature presume to be in control of events and times? Can collective creatureship regulate any or all things? Is man the master of his own destiny? Is man wielding the sceptre of rulership? If so, please state one Biblical declaration of such. Where is example? Where is proof? Where is the evidence? Does history give an example? Name one such case that does. **"The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD" (Prov. 16:33). "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand" (Prov. 19:21).**

Did the Creator see fit to create all men equal? To claim that He did is to state clearly the position of utter ignorance that all of Adam's race must take before Infinite Omniscience. If you imagine that all men are created equal, then you are in a state of ignorance on this matter.

Are all men of equal height? weight? strength? intelligence? talent? temperament? color?

comeliness? modesty? ability? standing before God?

In some ways men are alike. They are all sinners (Christ Jesus alone excepted). They are all destitute of means to alter their position - the position of a guilty sinner before a Holy and offended God. They all stand in desperate need. They all are unworthy of the least of His mercies. They are all undeserving and undesiring of God and the things of God. They are unwilling to come to God - for they are unwilling to forsake their sins. They are all dead in trespasses and in sins. They are all under the wrath of God. And there is much more.

All men are not the same, for He has said, to some men, **"...Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee"** (Jer. 31:3). And to some others, He said, **"...I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"** (Matt. 7:23). What did God mean by these two expressions? What He said, or something else? What else?

Some of mankind are permitted to live out long and eventful lives. Others are taken out at an earlier age. In fact, I believe that the history of man during these approximate 6,000 literal years of man's existence will verify that a majority of those born pass into eternity in the time of their infancy.

Why is this? Is it because some are more worthy of immediate ushering into God's presence than others? Is it because some are deemed more suitable to mortal life than others? Why is this? Answer: It is the sovereign prerogative of God alone to do with His own as seemeth Him good!

God is sovereign. He is sovereign in all His many

appointments and in all His Divine operations. He does as He will. In all circumstances that He sovereignly brings about, He rules and overrules according to His own wise counsel and choice.

It was God who confronted Pharoah with such circumstances that he hardened his heart and refused to let God's people go. God had commanded, by Moses' utterance to Pharoah, **"Let my people go."** But God had also told Moses, **"I will harden his heart, that he shall not let my people go"** (Ex. 4:21).

God hardened Pharoah's heart by forcing upon him the requirement that he accept the word of God whom Pharoah "did not know". And Pharoah, being a sinner, acted according to his own nature and rebelled. Pharoah is responsible because he was a sinner who refused to bow before God in obedience. He is a sinner and totally responsible for his own actions. He is responsible.

"And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharoah, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharoah said, who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go. I KNOW NOT THE LORD, neither will I let Israel go" (Ex. 5:1-2) (emph. DT).

"I KNOW NOT THE LORD" (emph. DT) is Pharoah's truthful acknowledgment. Had he known God, he would have obeyed the command of God. Had he "known" God, he would have "obeyed" God! But, he knew not God. He is a sinner, and he knows not God. The same goes for all sinners. They know not God!

But read further into the case. Read Romans 9:14-18. **"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with**

God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharoah, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared through all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

Pharoah is a fallen sinner. His heart is deceitful above all things and is desperately wicked. He is in a state of total depravity and all his faculties are impotent to do anything acceptable and pleasing to God, who he "knows not". Depravity cannot search out God - even if it wanted to.

Dear reader, when Scripture speaks of God, He is seen on His Throne, and at the Helm, steering according to His own good pleasure. Please read Ephesians 1:11; Proverbs 21:1; Daniel 4:35.

The Doctrine of God is the foundation doctrine. And upon this doctrine all other doctrines must be built. Any doctrine, whatever it may be, must stand or fall upon its relation to the foundation doctrine. And that doctrine is hereby stated: God "is" God!

The imagined god of so-called "modern man" is completely lacking in power. Men imagine their god to be filled with the best of good intentions toward them, but somehow Satan and the "freewill" of man is preventing him making good on his intentions. This imagined god is very puny indeed - is he not? And who among us can rest assured in these

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Who Is God?

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good intentions - when there is no power to execute?

We also declare that the imagined god of so-called "modern man" is completely lacking in wisdom and discernment. So-called "modern man" has convinced himself that God loves everybody. Now, were this the case, then God would be lacking in wisdom. Time and eternity makes known that everybody does not come to be saved. Did God not know?

The God of the Bible is so very much different from the god of so-called "modern man." Human enlightenment has not brought man to see and to know God. Rather, human enlightenment has deepened the belief among man that he is a god unto himself. Humanism is steeped within this so-called "modern man." And he "knows not God"!

Who "is" God? Let Scripture answer: **"Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture"** (Psa. 100:3).

I am persuaded that if God's people are properly and scripturally taught who God is; they will no longer rebel at the grand doctrines of the Bible. Rather, they will relish these precious truths, and rejoice in them. And they will strive to live to please such a God as is their God. **"...but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits"** (Dan. 11:32). May God be pleased to reveal Himself in this way to all His people as He uses men to declare His Word.

I pray that God, in great mercy, will make Himself known more fully to me - and to each of His

children everywhere. I want to know Him better so that I will love Him more, so that I will serve Him more, and worship Him more acceptably. I pray that God will bless us with knowledge of Himself.

I want the church that I pastor to be actively seeking to know Him more fully. I want all of us to live close to Him and to have our lives reflect His perfect love in our hearts. I want us - all of us - to put our time and energies and our very lives completely at His disposal. To be used of Him is our grand aim and goal.

God's people must be taught the truth. They must be indoctrinated and established in the truth. And the truth must be taught in love. Love that is of God leads us to Him and then teaches us of Him. And His love being shed abroad in our hearts leads us to teach His Word, faithfully, to those He sends us to.



Brief Truths

(Continued from page 11) ♦

to exalt himself, he is guilty of the same sin. All honor and glory belong only to God, **"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen"** (Eph. 3:20-21). Speaking to glorify ourselves or to credit ourselves using God's truth or glory is vain and treating God as useless. **"...Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness"** (Psa. 29:1-2). Please do not use God's Holy Name in vain!



Love Your Church

(Continued from page 7) ♦

we will love to tithe. If you do not tithe, you are robbing God. **"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse,**

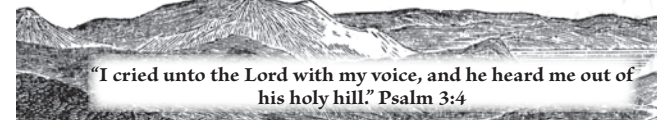
that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the window of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:8-10). If you do not tithe, you are hindering the work of the Lord through His church. The tithe is there to supply the needs

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Selahs

By Tomas Julius G. Salacup
Christological Baptist Mission
Vallejo, CA



The Inanimate Clay

"Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What maketh thou? or thy work, He hath no hands" (Isa. 45:9)?

Clay has no voice, will, or desire. It just waits on the Potter to be picked up, and without a sign of restraint, it is fashioned as the Potter desires it. And thus, a perfect example of who man is as we are clay in God's hands. No one denies that man was taken from the clay. It is a fact established as early as the 6th day of creation. But when it comes to the sovereignty of God, in choosing and predetermining some to salvation, and leaving others to destruction because of their sins, things change.

The inanimate clay now rebels and reasons, "This is not fair, and very illogical! What about them? Where is God's love? Is He not a monster when He does that?" Paul

knew this would be the natural reaction of his readers. To settle this, he wrote **"Nay but, O man, who art thou that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus"** in Romans 9:20? Sadly, this is what we see in the religious world today in general. They claim they believe God to be a sovereign ruler and yet would not be an inanimate clay when things do not go according to their traditional beliefs, as they were once taught.

Sinners must be like Abraham, who, in a like case, acknowledged himself to be but "dust and ashes" (where pots/clays come from) when he entreated the Lord in Sodom and Gomorrah. And the Lord was not angry at his importunity (Genesis 18). To dispute a matter with Him is the highest instance of arrogance and impudence. Let God the Potter be as Himself and man as the inanimate clay that he is. Selah!



The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. With 1 Kings 3:5 in mind, what is the appropriate way for me to ask God for things?

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There are three ways we need to come before the Throne of Grace to ask Petitions of our Lord and Saviour! First, we must ask in meekness. Knowing our weaknesses and shortcomings, we will be like Solomon, and admit that we have no abilities of ourselves to do the works God has appointed us to do. **“And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in”** (1 Kings 3:7). Selah! Now “that is” how to pray!

“For I know that in me [that is, in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do” (Rom. 7:18-19). Like the Apostle Paul, God blessed Solomon for his true humility and the servant awareness of his own inadequacies. I think, too many times in this world, we think we are ready for more responsibilities and a so-called “bigger piece of the pie” when we have not even begun to grasp the elementary graces that are necessary to move forward! God does so much for us each and every day, and if we do not stop to thank Him for each of these blessings, abilities,

opportunities, etc, then we will end up taking them for granted and assume that we are doing it all on our own! Humility and meekness and their sister graces of gratitude and thanksgiving are necessary starter building blocks for God’s people. If we cultivate them, we will find ourselves growing and praying in appropriate ways to our great God of grace.

The second way to pray for things is in faith! What a great word! Faith believes in God! Faith is trusting in His Word, His promises and His abilities! Faith is knowing that God is able, God is good, God is great, God is awesome, God is loving, God is...everything! As we come to times in our lives that drive us to our knees to petition Him for our needs, faith will make our prayers resonate with assurance and hope that God will answer them, to His glory and honor! Selah! Think about it!

Faith is necessary, because it indicates that our hearts are in the right condition to pray. We know that God is real, yeah, but not just that He exists! **“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble”** (Jas. 2:19). But that is not enough, is it? That is not faith, is it? **“...faith is the (very) substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”** according to Hebrews 11:1. Faith needs to be a substantial evidence **“of things not (physically) seen”** as of yet! But we have envisioned them through faith! We know, by the grace of God what we need! And truly, even if we do not know

the nuts and bolts of what we need, we know that we need God’s will to be done, eh? That is faith in the asking and that is what God requires of a successful prayer! **“...as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray...And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth”** (Luke 11:1-2). No prayer of faith is complete without that phrase, **“Thy will be done...!”**

The third way to pray to God is with zeal! This extraordinary attribute is elusive to the majority of God’s People, I truly believe. Humility and meekness are attributes that we are many times forced to our knees to admit (after our pride has tripped us up again!). Faith should really become “second nature” to God’s children after He “time after time” comes through for us! How can we doubt His ability when He has never failed? How foolish not to trust in the omnipotent One! But zeal is often lacking in my prayer.

“Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people...” (II Chron. 1:10). Zeal is something that is typically out of my comfort zone. I feel unworthy, as I should, but God says to come boldly to the throne of grace! Why? Not from any merit of mine, but because He delights to answer our prayers and supply our needs! **“The...prayer of the upright is his delight... such as are upright in their way are his delight...Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him”** (Prov. 15:8/11:20/8:30). If we pray zealously, in addition to meekness and faith, we can delight in God,

as well! **“...they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God”** (Isa. 58:2). Selah! Think about it!

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1 Kings 3:5 states: **“In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.”**

Prior to the entirety of Scripture being inspired, revealed to men, and canonized there were occasions that God gave revelations to men in dreams (Gen. 26:24; 28:12; 46:2; Dan. 2:7; 7:1; Matt. 1:20; 2:12, 19, 22). This particular dream was unique in that it provided an ongoing two way conversation between young Solomon and the Lord as recorded in 1 Kings 3:5-15. Solomon rehearses all the blessings God had bestowed upon David and the kindness that He had showed him. Solomon then acknowledged God’s kindness and grace in making him king in the stead of David. Solomon also confesses that he is young and inexperienced, humbled by such great responsibility and feeling inadequate for the task at hand. He then pleads for the Lord to give him wisdom and understanding: **“Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people”** (1 Kings 3:9)? Solomon’s response

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2. How do I learn to forgive myself...or should I?

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"And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?" (John 8:3-5). Indeed, what would Jesus Christ, the holy One say about this adulterous woman? His first remark was for all of us (righteous or self-righteous witnesses) in verse 7 **"...He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."** This quickly clears the crowd, does it not? Both in that Pharisee crowd, but also in our own hearts, we no longer can condemn this woman for any sin, because we all are guilty... Selah! Think about it!

After the witnesses get to that point, the perpetrator (us?) needs to get to that point, as well. And that is to whom the Lord directs His next penetrating remarks, **"...Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more"** (John 8:10-11). The forgiveness in these words are divine! **"There is therefore now no condemnation to them**

which are in Christ Jesus..." (Rom. 8:1)! We have been justified by the sacrifice and love of Jesus, so that even though we know we sinned, and we know we are still a sinner (Saved by Grace?) and know that we may yet fall into sin again, we must realize that our slate is cleared yet again by the holy love of our Lord!

I truly weep as I hear the plaintive cry of the poor sinner that asks such a question, "How do I 'learn' to forgive myself...or even should I?" Oh, the unworthiness of mankind. Not just you, but me, too. Of course, the right answer is we know that we ought to forgive ourselves, but experientially, how do we learn to do it? We, who know our weaknesses best, know that we are not worth forgiving (again and again?). And I am not going to argue with that! I am not worth forgiving, either, and we will never meet anyone that will ever come to that high bar of being "worth" God sending His precious Son to die for "my" sins-to justify me of my sins! That is why it is so important that we learn the definition of God's sovereign grace. Grace is unmerited favor. It is undeserved favor; none have ever deserved it. In fact, if you study it deeper, it is really unwarranted favor... not only do we not deserve to be forgiven of our sins, it is morally wrong for God to forgive us our sins, if we do not take into account that the very real penalty of our terrible sins have already been paid for. The stripes for "our sins" have been laid upon our precious Redeemer, Beloved sinner! **"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried**

our sorrows...he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:4-6).

To learn how to forgive ourselves, we have to ultimately trust the Lord that He means it... we "are" forgiven, and it is time for us to **"...go, and sin no more."** The pictures in Scripture are actually pretty awesome in this grace of forgiveness! God says in Micah 7:18-19 **"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."**

Have you ever forgiven someone and watched as you see the relief wash over your friend as they see that you really do mean it? Did that not feel awesome? **"He delighteth in mercy!"** That is the joyous power of forgiveness! God rejoices to forgive us! I know! We do "not" deserve it! We should "not" be allowed on the streets again! **"But..."but God"**...rejoices to forgive those whom He loves! ...and that is you, child.

To learn how to forgive ourselves is to recognize that the love of God is real. He threw our sins into the depths of the sea; He is not ever going to bring it up again! **"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us"** (Psa. 103:12). Walk as far East as you want, and you will never find West...that is the picture of the rest

of our lives, beloved reader! He has forgiven us, and how faithless is it if we do not love Him (back) enough to embrace His forgiveness and love by giving ourselves wholly unto Him, too? Selah! Think about it! Yes! We should forgive ourselves! Then we serve Him with joy, not sorrow! God really has made us whole again, so we can love Him wholly! Lord, I love You, too...!

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I am not sure that a question like this is ever stated in the Scriptures. It may be a question more suited for a psychologist or philosopher to answer. I am neither but I will attempt to give an answer of the hope that lies in me.

I have been saved for nearly 42 years. God in His marvelous grace has made me to feel the weight and guilt of my sins which constantly drives me to Christ for cleansing. At the age of 21, God called me out of darkness into His marvelous light and showed me the wickedness of my sins and then led me to the only way of forgiveness, through faith in the precious blood of Christ, His perfect sacrifice, His death, burial, and resurrection. I was made to see that Christ bore the entirety of my sin debt and punishment while He suffered on the cross. **"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed...For Christ also hath once suffered**

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Forum Question #1

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demonstrated a sincere humility and dependence upon God. He simply asked for wisdom and understanding as he fulfilled his office as king of Israel. God was delighted with the attitude of Solomon and commended him for not asking for personal enrichment or long life. God promised to give him more understanding and wisdom than all other kings. God also gave him riches and honor, surpassing all the kings of his day. The remainder of I Kings 3 provides us with a demonstration of the wisdom of Solomon in the case of the two women and the baby that established the king as a man of great insight and understanding. **“And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment”** (I Kings 3:28).

I commend Solomon for his humble prayer and dependence upon God. However, this may not be the best example in Scripture for believers to follow for a couple of reasons. First, this was an extraordinary revelation by God given to the newly minted king in a dream. We acknowledge it as such, but dreams are not the way in which God works or reveals things to His children today. I contend that God no longer reveals things to men in dreams in any form or fashion. Hebrews 1:1-2 declares: **“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.”** By way of the blessed

revelation and advent of the Son of God we can joyfully state that a greater than Solomon has been revealed. We would be far better served to study the contents of the Model Prayer that is revealed by Christ in the synoptic Gospels to understand how we are to ask God for things (Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4). We are to come humbly and reverently as we approach the throne of God. As we pray we are to exalt and desire the will of God in our daily life. We are to pray for physical and spiritual sustenance along with a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation in the attitude of our hearts. It would be far more profitable to study the prayer life of the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles to gain insight on the subject of fruitful prayer. It would be good for us to follow the example of our perfect Lord as He prayed in the garden: **“nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt”** (Matt. 26:39). Christ exemplified a complete resignation to the will of the Father as He prayed and this ought to be the way that we approach Him as well.

Second, the matter of asking God for things is simply stated in the Holy Scriptures! Praise God, the answer to the question is not left up to speculations, dreams, or new revelations! Hebrews 5:16 declares: **“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”** James 1:5-6 states: **“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. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”** I John 5:14-15 declares: **“And this is the confidence that we have**

in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” We can come to God at any time we have need of His help and we can come boldly by the authority of the name and power of the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. We must come in faith, praying according to the revealed will of God. When we follow these simple principles we can be sure we are asking God for things in a proper manner.

What a joy to simply trust what has been revealed in the Holy Scriptures! I fear that we live in an age where people are searching for deeper insights into God outside of His Word. It is almost as if some are trying to find something new, exciting, and more spiritual. Baptist people would do well to simply search the Scriptures, believing, embracing, and practicing what is clearly set forth in the Holy Book alone. This is what characterized our Baptist forefathers, a complete and unreserved belief in the authority of Scripture alone for all faith and practice.



With I Kings 3:5 in mind, what is the appropriate way for me to ask God for things?

“In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, “Ask what I shall give thee” (I Kings 3:5).

Before getting to the details of the ask, there is an obvious set of questions that must be asked

and answered. First, “Does the Lord appear to His children in dreams today?” The answer is no. Hebrews 1:1-2 clearly states that, while the Lord presented Himself in divers manners (different ways), but has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son. That is to say, that God in the flesh, Jesus Christ, literally spoke to man while upon this earth. This gives us, then, understanding that the “divers manners” are past, and that the revelation of Jesus Christ according to His Word is sealed and sufficient as God’s presentation to man. This is confirmed by Paul in I Corinthians 13:8-10, answering the second question that may arise, “Does God present Himself personally, privately, and in a visual or auditory way today?” This scripture declares that there was a time of prophecy, that is, revelation from God directly to men, but that time would and did cease. This time of ceasing would be connected to that which is perfect, which, no doubt, is the Word of God. The circumstances, then, surrounding this interaction are particularly unique to Solomon as recorded in scripture.

The request itself in I Kings 3, though, may and should be most familiar to the child of God. Comparing the answer King Solomon gave with what the Lord Jesus Christ said in John 14:13 is most beneficial. In the cited passage, the Lord said, **“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”** Now consider what king Solomon asked for in I Kings 3:9, **“Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I many discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great**

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Forum Question #1

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a people?" There are several common elements to these passages, which shall be addressed accordingly.

First, it is appropriate to ask for the glory of God. Solomon was asking for understanding for the glory of God, that God would be glorified in the rule and wellbeing of His people. Solomon desired that Israel, the chosen nation of God, would exist in a most God-honoring way, and that for the glory of God. In Solomon's desire for discernment, we can clearly view that he desired the glory of God to be on full display, that the people of God would be ruled and governed with the holiness of God on full display, and that the people of God would be submissive to the discernment so granted by God unto righteousness and good works. This was all asked for the glory of God. The Lord Jesus Christ confirms this in John 14:13 when He declares unto His people the absolute appropriateness to ask and pray according to the name and reputation of the Son of God, and that for the glory of God. Any and all asking, then, should first and foremost be an ask seeking, not the will and pleasure of men/women, but the glory of God according to His righteousness.

Secondly, it is appropriate to ask in humility. In I Kings 3:7, king Solomon recognizes that he is immature, a servant, and has little understanding. He shows humility being numbered among the people of God and considers the vastness of the kingdom to be overwhelming compared to his present incompetence. In John 14:13, a similar view is taken. The asking is to be done in humility,

seeking the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not our own name, reputation, or kingdom. In asking the Lord our prayers, seeking the glory of God, the pre-eminence of the Lord Jesus, and all with absolute humility before the living God is truly the appropriate way to ask the Lord for things.

Next, it is appropriate to ask specifically. In I Kings 3:9, Solomon was specific in asking for understanding. The Lord Jesus states in John 14:13 that, **"Whatsoever ye shall ask,"** indicating that we would be (and should be) asking for specific things. When evaluating what types of "things" it is ok to ask for, please review the previous notations about the passage, asking yourself, "is this request for my glory, or for God's glory," and, "am I asking this thing with a proud heart, or a heart of humility." Satisfying those two questions "honestly," a child of God can come to understanding as to whether their request is indeed appropriate. Please permit a word of caution, though, dear reader. Please do not make up your mind what you would do, then ask the Lord to bless it without seeking God's glory or seeking God in humility. An example may be as follows: a man takes a job that would take him out of legitimate fellowship with the local church. He moves his family. Then the man asks the Lord to bless his endeavors. Do you see, dear reader, how that this line of request is not appropriate unto the Lord? When did this man seek God's glory in this request? When did this man seek humility in the name of the Lord in this request? This example request, obviously then, is self-centered, self-interested, and self-exalting.

Also, it is appropriate to ask responsibly. I Kings 3:9

describes king Solomon asking for something that he fully intends on using for the glory of God. In John 14:13, the Lord declares that He will do....whatsoever [we] ask in His name. We can reasonably conclude, then, that we should be ready, willing, able, and committed to behaving responsibly and in a God-honoring way with whatever we ask for. If God is pleased to grant us the blessings of answered prayer, the only right and God-honoring behavior is to use that granted blessing for the glory of God, in humility, and with a heart of thankfulness. We may attach a buyer-beware sign, then, to asking the Lord for specific things. He may give them to you. Please pray responsibly.

Lastly, it is appropriate to ask for discernment, that is, discretion and prudence concerning good or bad. John 14:13 simply echoes this line of thinking. Asking in the name of the Lord Jesus implies that one is asking a holy, righteous, good thing. As the Lord cannot and will not sin, asking a sinful thing would be asking contrary to His name, reputation, and conduct, and thus an erroneous request. Asking, then, that the Lord grant wisdom, that is, the application of godly knowledge in the circumstances of life, is a most appropriate thing to do.

In all, when asking, please consider the following lessons from scripture. Ask and pray for the glory of God. Ask and pray in humility. Ask and pray specifically. Ask and pray responsibly. Ask and pray with discernment/discretion. Hitting the mark with these items as described in Scripture, every child of God would do well in glorifying God in our prayer lives. Please consider these things heavily, child of God.

If God's glory, self-humility, discernment in good/bad

with specifics of prayer, and responsibility before God are foreign to you, dear reader, you would do well to make your calling in election sure. If your prayer life is all about you, what you want, what you can get, and what you think is right or wrong, by the Word of God I encourage you to repent, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved. May the Lord bless.

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"In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee" (I Kings 3:5).

In our text we find that God had given Solomon the option to ask of Him whatsoever he desired. It has long been my opinion that Solomon had a great measure of wisdom in asking for wisdom as he did rather than riches, fame, long life, or the life of his enemies. As we know, this request was well pleasing to God, which brings us to our topic this month: How should we ask God for things?

First, as simple as this sounds we must ask. James 4:1-2 states: **"From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not."** If we refuse to ask we can expect not to receive. The Pulpit Commentary has this to say about this truth: "like Solomon, we have but to ask, and

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God will give." Solomon was "not" a favorite of Heaven. God has no favorites—that would argue imperfection in the Deity. **"Every one that asketh receiveth,"** etc. **"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord,"** etc. **"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, ... and it shall be given him."** If we have not wisdom, blessing, pardon, peace, it is all for want of asking. God is "more ready to hear than we to pray." And observe here: we are commanded to ask, and God is sure to give, because He loves to give; it is His nature and property to give. Not only (as has been beautifully said) is "the greatest Being in the world the greatest giver," but it is an essential part of His perfections to give. We often say "It is more blessed to give than to receive," but God acts on this principle. It is the nature of man to take. The first lesson the child learns is to grasp. Covetousness, the desire to have, is a part of our being. It is a part of His being to desire to impart. He abhors a vacuum.

Secondly, we must ask in faith. We are not to ask in prayer and then go away thinking "I knew God would not answer that..." We must ask believing that God is able to answer our prayers according to His will. James 1:6 declares: **"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."** James 1:7 continues the thought by unequivocally declaring: **"For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord."** Without faith it is impossible to please God, therefore if we ask without faith our prayer is not pleasing to God. John Gill says

this in his Exposition of the Entire Bible: "Not only in the faith of the divine Being that God is; but in the faith of the promises he has made; and in the faith of his power and faithfulness to perform them; and in the faith of this, that whatever is asked, according to the will of God, and is for his glory, and his people's good, shall be given."

In addition to this we need to examine what we are asking for. By this I mean we must examine whether what we are about to ask for will help us or hinder us in our walk with the Lord. If it is an asset we should ask of God, however, if it will hinder us then we have no business asking God for what ever it is. We must settle this manner up front prior to asking of God. James 4:3 brings out this truth: **"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."** God knows our hearts and knows what is best for us. He knows why we ask for what we ask for, therefore, if we are asking for things that pertain to the flesh, that will take us away from God, or that may destroy our Christian Testimony, then we must not be surprised if those requests go unanswered. We must also not point our fingers at God as if to fault Him for not giving us our worldly desires.



Forum Question #2

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for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit... For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (I Pet. 2:24; 3:16; Heb. 10:14). When Christ died He put away my sins by the sacrifice of Himself, thus securing forgiveness and eternal life for me

personally. The moment God the Holy Spirit gave me the gift of saving faith, the righteousness of God was imputed to me and I was justified. Acts 13:38-39 declares: **"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."** Thus I am fully justified by the blood of Christ, sanctified by the blood of the everlasting covenant (Heb. 13:20-21), accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6); and complete in Him (Col. 2:9-10). Ephesians 1:7 states: **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."** In light of the truth stated plainly in these Scriptures it is far more important for me to recognize that God forgives my sins in Christ and take comfort in that truth. I look to Christ and His finished work on my behalf, not to myself or my feelings which are fickle.

I am sure that I cannot even begin to number all the inward and outward sins I have committed in the course of my life. All the sins of omission and commission would certainly overwhelm me if I were able to name them all. I am forgiven through faith in the perfect work of Jesus Christ on my behalf. I daily feel the inward struggle of the old nature and the new, the flesh and the Spirit, and cry out like the blessed apostle: **"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin"** (Rom. 7:24-25). Christ alone is my victory

over sin! Christ alone secured my forgiveness! Therefore let my mind and heart be occupied with the perfect work of my great Saviour each and every day!

I have a promise from the Word of God clearly stating that God will cleanse me of sin as part of my Christian walk as I confess my sins. **"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us"** (I John 1:7-10). I cast myself entirely on Christ's sufficiency and God's faithfulness which is enough for me. If we would learn to dwell more on Christ and His perfections, commands, and example we would certainly grow in grace.

I am reminded of the hymn written by Edward Mote that has brought much comfort to my heart through the years:

"My hope is built on nothing less,
Than Jesus blood and
righteousness,
I dare not trust the sweetest
frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus name.

When darkness seems to hide his
face,
I rest on His unchanging grace,
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the vale.

His oath, His covenant, His
blood,
Support me in the whelming
flood,

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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).

Saved to The Very End

"For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death" (Psa. 48:14).

One of the most undeniable truths of this life is death. Because sin entered by the disobedience of Adam, we are all subject to death. Not to say that this is an easy truth to swallow, but the believer has an eternal hope even in death.

How many times have you been to a funeral and someone says "death is a natural part of life" or something to that effect? Certainly, something so painful and shattering is not natural. Death is so earth-shaking and causes such upheaval because it is not natural. It is not part of the original creation. When God looked upon His creation and said "it is very good," death was not part of this declaration.

Mankind has spent and will continue to spend much effort in cheating death. Whether the explorers of old seek for the "fountain of youth" or the modern-day scientists try to remedy the death problem, man continues to seek in vain an escape. Death comes to all mankind because of sin.

But how many Jordan's has the believer been led through? How many times has God buried the Egyptians in the Red Sea? Will mortal death finally be the water that overflows the child of God? No, even in death God will lead His children. Unto death and through death God is the light of His precious saints. He has

led you through many a trial. If death comes to you at a ripe old age can you not look back and see the Egyptians and their chariots dead on the shore? Have you not found yourself singing the song of Moses over and again through your many years? Will God forsake His children at the last? Will that promise "I will never leave you nor forsake you" that has never failed throughout your mortal frame now fail at the finish line? Be encouraged even at the end, God will not fail. He purposed you in Christ. He caused you to live an earthly life in Christ. But did it not have a purpose? To finally be glorified and fully conformed to the image of His Son? Glory is at the door. Be encouraged dear saint, His face waits just beyond the veil.

"Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea" (Ex. 15:1).

"But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave

Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him" (Isa. 43:1-7).

"And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. 22:4).



Love Your Church

(Continued from page 11) ♦

of the church – the pastor's salary, the upkeep of the building, the support of missions, etc. It is sad that in today's society, the Lord's people think that they cannot afford to give tithes and offerings. Their thinking is that they "do not make enough or can not afford to tithe." Everything they have is God's – all money, possessions, etc. God only demands the tenth part of them in return. And when we do what He commands, He will pour out blessings more than we can receive. We must support the church in every way possible. Love the church.

In conclusion, let us look to King Hezekiah for an example. In II Chronicles, Hezekiah demonstrates his love for God and sincerity to serve Him. Please read chapters 29-31, and you will understand the great joy he had in serving God truthfully. **"And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that**

which was good and right and truth before the LORD his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered" (II Chron. 31:20-21). Love your church.



Forum Question #2

(Continued from page 16) ♦

When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, May I then in Him be found,
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.

Chorus:

On Christ, the solid Rock I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand."



The Short Pews



Brief Articles
by Curtis Pugh
(1944 - 2018)

Stirred But Not Changed

Every sound Baptist preacher with whom I have spoken on the matter deplores the sad spiritual state of the majority of Christians today. On the one hand there is the sad spiritual state of those poor professing Christians – perhaps genuine children of God among them – who have

♦ (Continued on page 19)



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



100 Reasons for the Pre-Tribulation Rapture

[Concluded from our last issue]

The most outstanding Baptist theologian in the south in the 1800's was unquestionably J. R. Graves. He was editor of *The Tennessee Baptist*. In 1883 he wrote:

The Second Advent of Christ manifestly has two aspects or comprises two events: His coming into the air for all his saints, and His visible appearing in glory to the whole world with all his saints.

The translation of God's children above the clouds of heaven, there to remain during the period that God visits an unbelieving, wicked world with desolating punishments, is most clearly revealed both by the prophets and Christ Himself through His evangelists and apostles.

How can post-trib Baptists account for Graves' views on this since according to them pre-tribulationism was never heard of in America until 1859? Can we conceive of J. R. Graves suddenly embracing the doctrine of a mentally deranged little girl that he heard of in Scotland? Did Graves go after new doctrines? or did he stand upon the old doctrines? Is there an honest post-triber who will publicly affirm that J. R. Graves received his prophetic beliefs from Margaret MacDonald and furnish proof?

To the north was A. J. Gordon, famed pastor of Clarendon Street

Baptist Church in Boston. Gordon wrote in the August 1891 issue of *The Watchword*: "The church is to be caught up to be with the Lord in the air before the Lawless One is enthroned, before the Great Tribulation."

I. M. Haldeman, pastor of the First Baptist Church of New York City, said in 1916:

Antichrist is the beginning of the Tribulation, the Tribulation cannot begin till the Church is taken out of the way The Tribulation epoch will thus begin by the secret and sudden coming of the Lord for His Church and the removal of the Holy Spirit.

William Bell Riley (1861-1947) was an able debater, writer, and founder of Northwestern Schools. During his life he addressed an auditorium of 2,640 seats, filled with people, at the First Baptist Church of Minneapolis. In 1917 Riley wrote:

Are the Church and the Kingdom the same? — NEVER. The Kingdom is a future thing and the church is a present thing. The church is not to go through the Tribulation.

How can post-tribers account for the wide spread belief in a pre-trib rapture among the leading Baptists in America? Why were such men not branded as "new-liters" by all other Baptists? The answer is not difficult to give. The pre-millennial Baptists of that day held to a pre-trib coming of Christ.

Some post-tribers among Baptists admit that they have changed their views on the second coming of Christ. Dave MacPherson, who has a Baptist background, concedes in a letter to me: "Our family use to be pre-tribers at one time." Joe Bell admits on page 1 of his book, *The Second Coming: A Reexamination of the Rapture Question*, that he held "without question to the 'pre-trib rapture' for over 20 years." In view of such statements, who suddenly obtained new lite? Who suddenly changed their position? More than a few modern post-trib Baptists would be forced to admit that they have changed their view from a pre-trib rapture to a post-trib rapture in the last few years.

Post-tribulationism among Sovereign Grace Baptists is scarcely over 20 years old, yet they claim that their view is the historic Baptist position! This new brand of pre-millennialism came from "new lite" obtained from reading books by non-Baptists or Baptists who are leaders in the Neo-Evangelical Movement. For post-trib brethren to brand those who continue to hold to the old doctrine as "MacDonaldites" and "Scofieldites" is almost unforgivable. Such activities display a depth of theological bigotry seldom excelled in all the history of Baptist churches.

The Strange Bedfellows of Post-Tribers

The New Evangelicals in this country almost uniformly reject the pre-tribulational view of Christ's coming. Those who have examined the rise of modern post-tribulationism can clearly see that it is in the main a teaching which began with the Neo-Evangelicals in this country.

In his excellent book, *The New Neutralism*, William E. Ashbrook writes:

If one is to be aware of the perils of the New Neutralism he must see it as a movement born of compromise. It had its origin, like so many of the isms of our day, in an inadequate view of sin, particularly the sin of apostasy. It is propagated for the most part by men who at best are shaky and uncertain as to that great New Testament doctrine of the imminent return of Jesus Christ. They have become infested, at least in measure, by the post or a-millennial notion of constructing a better social order along with their all-positive presentation of the gospel. The unscriptural idea of infiltrating the denominations with the leaven of affirmative truth is part of the stock in trade of the New Evangelicalism, as we shall attempt to show. Uncertainty concerning the truth of our Lord's return, coupled with fuzzy thinking as to the rapture of the Church, has provided an open door to the errors of this current neutralism.

Harold J. Ockenga, the father of the New Evangelicalism, was the first president of Fuller Seminary. Ockenga named the NAE, Fuller Seminary, Billy Graham, and *Christianity Today* as the sources of propagating the new mood among evangelicals. Today Fuller is the seat of post-tribulationism. This is the school where George Ladd has been teaching since 1950.

The doctrinal position of Fuller is well illustrated by Edward John Carnell, former president, and now active professor there. William Ashbrook writes again:

... the fact remains that Dr. Carnell's shaky position on inspiration, his accommodations toward science so-called, his rejection of the pre-tribulation

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Country Preacher

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rapture and his inclusivist philosophy toward the denominations, together with Iris general attitude toward fellowship with unbelievers and worldly indulgences, correctly represents the position of Fuller Seminary today.

Baptist brethren, take a good look at the leaders of the New Evangelicalism. Here are the most able defenders of your new brand of the post-trib doctrine. They are the founders and propagators of what you believe. Would you that are Sovereign Grace Baptists say that you are in good company?

Present Truth is an a-millennial publication. In the September, 1974, issue they have a footnote on page 28 recommending the book by Dave MacPherson on *The Unbelievable Pre-Trib Origin*. On page 36 they commend the writings of George Ladd in another footnote. This is printed in connection with a series of articles on a-millennialists. How far astray has professed pre-millennialist gone when his books are praised by a-millennialists? Could it be that these a-millennialists know that what Ladd and MacPherson hold to is closer to their view than to pre-millennialism?

Dave MacPherson is circulating a long list of what he calls post-tribers. On this list is the names of a good number of a-millennialists and post-millennialists. In a letter to me he says, "We included some post-mills and a-mills on our list." How can any man who claims to be a pre-millennialist put himself in the camp with a-millennialists and post-millennialists and seem to declare that they agree. Does Dave not know that post-millennialists believe that Christ comes at the end of the

millennium? Does he not know that a-millennialists oppose the millennial doctrine and believe in a general resurrection and judgment?

Does not the uniting together of such a group in a list of names circulated by Dave clearly indicate that post-tribers are more agreed with a-millennialists and post-millennialists than pre-millennialists? Remember, birds of a feather flock together. Dave feels more at home in the camp of pre-millennial opposers than with pre-trib pre-millennialists. Keep your company, Dave, we don't care to share it with you.

The unstable millennial view of Arthur Katterjohn is very evident in his book, *The Tribulation People*. On page 46 he says:

Arguments over an intermediate thousand-year kingdom, and counter-arguments by a-mill and post-millennarians are worthy subjects for study, but will likely not be resolved until history becomes theology's proof." On page 77 he writes: "But between the two most likely possibilities (a-millennialism and pre-millennialism) there is little practical difference.

The general view among post-tribers is that it does not matter what you believe about eschatology as long as you will put the church in the tribulation period. Will Meloon in the Nov-Dec., 1975, issue of *Eschaton* wrote: "So, whether you believe we are in that 'tribulation' period and facing Armageddon, or in the 'little season' of Rev. 2:3, 7, facing Gog and Magog, whether you spiritualize the '1000 years' to mean eternity (or as some do, meaning this very time, the present) or whether you literalize it and are looking forward to an earthy reign with Christ, we must agree, I think, that Christ comes

only *after* certain prophesied events and 'after the tribulation of those days' whether it be 'The Great Tribulation' or 'The Little Season' and we should be prepared; it *may* be soon, and 'later than you think!' But, it is post-tribulational, after . . . post, and this — not a form of millennialism — has more to do with a relevant message, pertinent to our times and of more practical significance than one's views about the millennium."

Such statements causes me to wonder if the post-trib doctrine may not become the eschatological view of the ecumenical movement. Most post-tribers say that it makes no difference about what you believe about the millennium, just so long as you hold to the new brand of the post-trib doctrine.

[Editor: A new edition of this writing will be available later this year through the Berea Bookstore]



Short Pews

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been fed a diet of "milk" polluted with the poison of Arminianism. Then there are those Baptists who profess to believe in sovereign grace, but who have never been really taught the Bible. They have heard topical sermons, doctrinal sermons, allegorical preaching, textual preaching and the like: all of which is "milk." But they have not heard consistent expository or exegetical preaching. Remember: "milk is what you get from the cow, but the meat is the cow herself." Apply that to preaching. If preaching is just "from the Bible" it is milk. If the Word itself is "served up" - that is, taught expositively, it is spiritual meat. Expository or exegetical

Bible teaching is explaining the Word itself: what they did in Ezra's day: **"So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading,"** (Nehemiah 8:8). Reading, explaining the meaning, and enabling people to understand the Word: what is wrong with doing that today? Those who are fed only "milk" will remain babies, spiritually. But on the other hand, Baptists are supposed to be people of the Book. They ought to be healthy "spiritual carnivores" excitedly feeding on the meat of the Word.

Paul observed babyhood (carnality) in the saints in Corinth. He wrote: **"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"** (1 Corinthians 3:1-4). Few will disagree that prolonged infancy among God's people is a problem today just as it was in Corinth. We have looked for a cure for this ailment, but settled for "snake oil."

Not too far back in Baptist history - in the 1800's - a new movement swept into American Baptist ranks. It was supposed to be the cure-all for carnality, deadness and apathy. Its foremost promoter was a man named Charles Finney. This fellow Finney was a Presbyterian who had rejected the concept of God's absolute sovereignty and ran to

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Short Pews

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the extreme free-will position. He is possibly the one Protestant that has influenced American Baptists more than any other. Finney was an advocate of the notion that man's will had not been affected by Adam's fall. He believed that all men could come in a saving way to Christ apart from any work of grace.

Today's popular views of those that object to God's sovereignty are properly called neo-Arminianism (new Arminianism) and semi-pelagianism – a somewhat modified form of the doctrines of Pelagius. We generally lump all these “free-willers” together and just call them Arminians. However, neither Arminius nor historic Arminians would have tolerated the practices of those who follow their teaching. Today's Arminians have run to seed on easy-believe-ism. Whether they call upon the lost to come to the front, pray a prayer, lift their hands, blink at the preacher or make a decision for Christ – or perhaps one of a half-dozen other things – they practice such things because of their belief. And their belief is that man's will was not ruined or even affected by Adam's fall. Man is a sinner: this they will admit. But they believe that man is a sinner because he sins. He can, they say, of his own free will choose Christ and good. The Bible, however, teaches that man sins because he is a sinner: that he was ruined by the fall of Adam and therefore will not and cannot do what is required of him in order to please God. Romans 8:8 proves that a natural man cannot please God: **“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”** Furthermore, sinners cannot come to Christ

apart from God's drawing them. The Lord Jesus said, **“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). Whatever you believe about the natural (unregenerate) man's will, by his will he cannot please God and cannot come to Christ in a saving way. None of his choices, decisions, or acts please God! “Revival meetings” are based upon Finney-ism: the idea that men can please God if stirred up. Uh-oh! These two ideas are incompatible! Either Finney-ism (revivalism) is right or the Bible is right! Which will you choose?

So we have this fellow Charles Finney come upon the American scene. Prior to his “ministry” Baptists believed that true revival was a move of the sovereign God among His people. They believed the prayers of God's people were a scriptural means. Consequently, they believed the saints of God needed to be occupied with prayer for revival. The old Baptists believed that a real revival had to be “prayed down.” It came from heaven and was sent by God in answer to the prayers of His people. Mr. Finney did not believe that a revival had to be “prayed down,” but rather that it could be “worked up.” Organization, publicity, musical specials of the right type, loud enthusiastic preaching, scare tactics, prolonged “altar calls,” emotional appeals to come forward – these and other psychologically manipulative tricks have been adopted and used by the followers of Finney. The fact that such “invitation system” tactics were never employed by the apostles did not matter to Finney. Nor does that fact matter to those who follow after the traditions inherited from Finney and his followers.

“Old timers” told of going to “camp meetings” and “revivals” just to watch the emotional displays of those affected by revivalist tactics. Later they would watch the “conversions” and “re-dedications” fizzle away into nothingness as “converts” and “rededicated” folk most often went back to their old lifestyles. Such “revival meetings” provided entertainment prior to the days of radio, movies, and TV. Today confusion reigns in the minds of people as to the purpose of “revival meetings.” Often what is called a “revival meeting” is actually an effort to “get folks saved” as the Arminians say. In other words, it is a series of evangelistic meetings. Occasionally folk understand that “revival meetings” are held to stir up the church to more zeal and activity – and perhaps living a more holy life. Thus “altar calls” for “salvation” and “re-dedication” are commonplace in spite of the total absence of such things in the New Testament. “Get ‘em emotionally wound up, make ‘em feel guilty, get ‘em down the aisle to weep and “dedicate” or “rededicate” and send ‘em home:” that's how it goes. If they stick, they stick. If they do not, too bad. Maybe next time they go through the cycle they will stick. And on the “revival circuit” many are recycled repeatedly year after year!

Not all revivalists are of the sort I am about to describe, but one Pentecostal preacher of a bygone day told a younger preacher how to tell when the revival was over in a place. He said, “When you can turn all the people upside down and cannot shake any more money out of them, the revival is over.” How is it that in “revival meetings” and “evangelistic services” most Baptist churches take offerings? No doubt **“wisdom is justified of**

her children,” (Matthew 11:19) and someone will come up with a soothing answer for my criticism. But passing the hat among unsaved folk asking them to pay for their own evangelization seems contrary to apostolic principles as stated in 3 John 1:7.

Now back in the good old days revival meetings were different than today. Many times only the beginning date was announced. Meetings would be held both during the daytime and the evening. The idea of no ending date was that the series of meetings would last as long as “God was working.” Later, in order to allow the “evangelist” to schedule more meetings (and perhaps because of the decreased interest on the part of the people) “revivals” were shortened to two weeks. Then, beginning sometime later in the mid to late 1900s they were shortened to only a week: later, to only Monday through Friday evenings. And in some places now there are “weekend revivals” held on Friday and Saturday evenings and perhaps Sunday mornings. The entertainment value of “revivals” has been surpassed by sports, movies, restaurant meals and weekend trips. “Revival preachers” just cannot even begin to compete unless they are themselves really unusual and unusually good at something or another: music, karate, slight of hand, being ethnically different, preaching while standing on their heads, or perhaps being the world's fastest guitar picker or the world's strongest man or an “ex” secret agent, “ex” pugilist or “ex” something or other.

A good number of years ago a pastor said to me: “I am tired of being stirred and not being changed.” His words have remained with me. Perhaps it is

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The Short Pews

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your experience too! Is that not what the “revivalist” does? His aim is to stir people up. If he is a “good preacher,” he is able to excite the flesh and that is what he does. His means is to affect at least some of people’s five senses. We have yet to hear of a revivalist who is a great chef and delights Baptist congregations with his cooking skills and thus tickles their taste buds. But the other four senses: feeling, hearing, seeing and, yes, smelling, have all been targeted by “revivalist” type preachers. I was in a Baptist meeting where the preacher had prearranged with certain men to spray air freshener into the air conditioning system at the proper moment so that it was smelled throughout the building. His topic: “The Secret Ingredient In The Anointing Oil.” The climax of his message was: “Can you smell it?” And for a moment, a thrill of wonderment went through the crowd as the fragrance spread – I repeat, for a moment. The people were stirred, but not changed: entertained, but not blessed! In speech classes we used to be required to prepare and make speeches with different aims. One kind of speech had the aim to entertain. How many “revival” sermons only entertain? The more of the five senses the “evangelist” can entertain and consequently the more he can stir people determines how good an “evangelist” he is. (Nobody goes away from a “revival meeting” saying, “I really heard some deep teaching from the Word of God tonight.”) Let no one think that most “revivalists” do not use all sorts of psychological manipulative methods/tricks. The “invitation system” itself is psychological manipulation! Is it

any wonder that the pastor just quoted – and we think a large number of other Baptists – are “tired of being stirred and not being changed.” Is that is the case with many if not most of God’s children who have experienced spiritual nausea by the repeated “stirring” without real spiritual change? God’s children hunger and thirst after righteousness: personal growth in holiness. If you are not concerned about being more like the Lord Jesus whom you profess to follow, there is something wrong with your experience. You do not need a “revival” or a “re-dedication” (whatever that is). You need to be born again!

Shall we continue with the vain traditions received from Charles Finney and some of our Baptist fathers or shall we turn again to the Lord? The Psalmist prayed thus: **“Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?”** (Psalm 85:6). He knew that revival – true revival – had to come from God. He prayed to God for it. Revival is to be desired because it brings joy (not mere happiness or fleshly delight) to God’s people. This verse says so! Have we forgotten that joy – real inner joy – is important, yea, necessary to God’s people? Nehemiah 8:10 says, **“...the joy of the LORD is your strength.”** Little joy equals little strength. Do you desire the spiritual strength necessary to change? Will you seek a revival – a real move of God – in your life and in your church? Or will you reason this way: to be on the safe side: churches should hold prayer meetings – special prayer meetings – begging God for revival – and just to be sure, bring in the best, high-powered “stirrer” (“evangelist”) around. In this way we can trust God and trust

Finney at the same time! How sad that we might even consider such a thing!

Do not the words, “I am tired of being stirred and not being changed,” reflect that jaded condition that exists among many Baptists because of the failed methods of Charles Finney and his followers? The word jaded is defined as, “feeling or showing a lack of interest and excitement caused by having done or experienced too much of something.” Jaded by having experienced too much stirring without any real change! What should we have expected? Can our Baptist churches really think to experience true revival by humanistic means? Should we not have seen this “burn out” - this jaded condition – coming? Is not the apathy and casual attitude toward the things of God not due at least in large part to “stirring” people, but without change? This jaded condition is not the fault of the church members. It is not even the fault of the pastors. It is the fault of Arminian thinking. It is the fault of Charles Finney. It is the fault of Baptist tradition! (Many a pastor will be criticized and opposed by some members and fellow pastors in his clique if he dares suggest not having the “annual revival.” After all, it is a tradition! You cannot be spiritual or succeed without Finney in your church.) Anybody remember what the Lord Jesus and Paul said about tradition? (See Mark 7:9 & 13; Colossians 2:8).

What is the solution? Bigger, more impressive and more entertaining “revivalists?” Having seen that bringing in the clowns has not only not worked, but has done harm, shall we continue with the same entertainment-based tradition? Being already in this rut shall we continue down it?

Someone said “a rut is just a grave with both ends knocked out.” Are we too dead, dense and spiritually blind to see that the “revival rut” is not bringing growth and spiritual change to God’s people? Seeing that the “revival meeting” path leads nowhere spiritually profitable, shall we Baptists blindly follow traditions of our own making? Or shall we get back to the Bible? Shall we go back to the methods of the apostles? What an innovative thought! Go back to Bible methods: apostolic methods? Just patiently preaching and teaching expository messages through the Bible? But that is so slow, unglamorous, and unattractive to the world and the flesh! Yes it is! But who are we fooling? Are we trying to be attractive to the world and the flesh? Or are we sincerely desiring to experience true revival: true change? Is it not both reasonable and biblical to think that feeding babes in Christ healthy “meat” - God’s Word – will result in healthy, real and lasting growth? And is not spiritual growth the “change” that God’s people need and want? After all, spiritual growth is positive change. And spiritual growth does not come from hearing “top-water” preaching. Shallow topical, textual, running-commentary-type preaching is not the meat of the Word! It takes time and effort to prepare a meal: it takes time and work to prepare a hearty spiritual meal. The apostles said, **“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word,”** (Acts 6:4): and this in their own local, Jerusalem church!

Churches do not need a gymnasium or a “dynamic young wavy haired evangelist” or any kind of religious entertainment. Churches do not need a gun club, or

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER
Financial Report
2-1-2022 to 2-28-2022

Beginning Balance.....	\$6130.55
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	500.00
S.G. B. C. Silsbee Tx.....	30.00
Carol Willett, Cottonwood Shores, TX	100.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Gladwin, MI	50.00
Grace B. C., Germanton, NC	50.00
The Lord's B. C., Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Cheapeake, OH	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wellington, KS	100.00
Beauty Mtn. B. C., Edmond WV	50.00
Southside BC, Fulton, MS	25.00
N. T. B. C. Goshen, IN	50.00
Parkway L. B. C., Springfield, OR	100.00
Indore BC, Indore, WV	300.00
West Jefferson BC, West Jefferson, OH.....	75.00
Emmanuel BC, Oldtown, KY.....	100.00
Berea BC, Stonington, IL.....	120.00
Bethel BC, Pasadena, TX,	50.00
Big Creek BC, Wayne, WV	400.00
Eld Donald Parker, Millport, AL.....	100.00
Faith BC, Lynn, AR.....	25.00

Divided Checks.....	0.00
Subscriptions	70.00
Anonymous	250.00
Sub Total	\$3005.00
TOTAL.....	\$9135.55

EXPENDITURES:

Postage	670.28
Printing.....	459.10
Supplies	0.00
Wages	1750.00
FICA	133.88
Div Cks	0.00
Total Expenditures	\$3013.26
ENDING BALANCE	\$6,122.29



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST
Financial Report
2-1-2022 to 2-28-2022

Beginning Balance.....	\$4,082.12
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Calvary Ind. B. C., Sumas, WA	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
TOTAL.....	425.00
TOTAL.....	4507.12
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio time.....	403.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	403.98
Interest	+0.03
ENDING BALANCE	\$4,103.17

The Short Pews

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a concealed carry class. Churches do not need Awana, a ladies aid society, a ball team or even new uniforms. In short, churches do not need any more fleshly tripe. (Tripe is literally the stomach of an animal eaten as food: by implication it means, "something that is worthless, unimportant, or of poor quality.") A church needs healthy meals – spiritual meals – served however often she meets. She is to be served for the most part by her pastor and other gifted men whom God may have placed within. Preachers are servants to the congregations, you know. That is what Paul wrote: **"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake,"** (2 Corinthians 4:5). Barnes says this means the pastor's time, talents and best efforts and plans belong to the congregation of which the preacher is the bond-slave. Feeding a congregation "spiritual meat" will require intensive study on the part of those men and prayer on the part of the whole church – prayer for them – and prayer for revival. The recognition of a need is the first step is resolving that need. Will you be done with tripe and seek a true revival at the throne of grace? Will you seek the meat of the Word? May God so move upon His churches that they cease desiring mere "stirring" by psychological tricks and methods and seek real spiritual growth by feeding upon the consistent expository teaching of the Word of God. God has given us His "manual" and we have substituted Finney's methods for it. Our doing is our undoing. Oh that the members of Christ's congregations may be changed and not merely stirred!



The Kentucky Baptist and the Burning Coals of Truth

C. D. Cole
(1885 - 1968)

God's Competitors:
"Ye shall be as Gods"



"...ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5). **"And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil"** (Gen. 3:22).

That the infinite, incomprehensible, and incomparable God should have competitors is the wonder of the ages, That the eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, and independent God should be opposed is the height of creature folly. That the Creator, Ruler, Preserver, and Saviour should be denied and caricatured is so amazing as to be shocking. Nevertheless, the Almighty and All-wise God has His competitors, opponents, and slanderers.

A competitor is one who strives with another for supremacy. Competition is the struggle for a common object. Men in business and professional life compete for the patronage of their fellows. And in the world of sports there is competition for mastery.

Competition With God for Sovereignty

Our texts suggest the thought of human competition with God for sovereignty--competition in the realm of authority. God is the One and only One who has the right and ability to do as He pleases. He is the one and only Creator; all others are creatures of His hand. He is the One and

only Lawgiver; all other moral beings are under His law and dominion. To deny this and to act as if it were not true is sin, God's sovereignty is declared throughout Holy Writ. **"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own"** (Matt. 20:15)? **"Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee"** (John 21:22)? **"...and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou"** (Dan. 4:35)? **"Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places"** (Psa. 135:6)? **"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created"** (Rev. 4:11).

Denial of the sovereignty of God is the very nature and essence of sin. Sin may be defined as competition with God for authority. Competition has been called the life of trade, but competition with God issues in eternal death.

Angels Were the First Sinners

Competition with God for supremacy and sovereignty had its origin among the angels with one of them taking the lead and

♦ (Continued on page 23)

Coals of Truth

(Continued from page 22) ♦

drawing others after him into this awful business. That slimy, slippery, hideous, loathsome, damning thing we call sin was born the day that Lucifer, the morning star said, **"...I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: ...I will be like the most High"** (Isa. 14:13-14).

Then the devil became the instigator of competition on the part of man. Sovereignty was the bait he held out to Eve when he, said "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Whatever is meant by this expression the idea of sovereignty is involved in it. God placed man under law and warned him that to violate it would mean death. The devil told them that to violate it would mean liberty and power and wisdom. He told them their eyes would be opened and they would be able to determine what is right and wrong. They would not have to be subject to what God says. They would be sovereign and do as they please. They would not have to be tied down by God's requirement for their lives. They would be free. So they entered into "cut-throat competition" with God for sovereignty. God had said, "This is my will for your lives;" they said, "We will" and died.

In What Sense Did Man Become Like God?

When man had sinned and thus rebelled against God's commandment, God said, "Behold, man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." Now, in what sense had man become like God? Certainly, not with respect to character. Man did not improve his character; but lost the good character with which he was created. It is certain that man did not come into possession of God's

attributes, such as power, holiness, and wisdom, Man lost power to live and died. He fell from his estate of holiness and became defiled. He lost his wisdom and became a fool. Surely it cannot be said that man became like God in fact. There is only one sense in which man did and could become like God, and only holy ambition for any man is the ambition to please and glorify God. "He who builds a church to God and not to fame, Will never mark the marble with his name," (Pope).

Results of Competition with God

The aim of competition with God for authority is human happiness but the results have been misery and woe. When man takes sovereignty in his own hands there is a break with God, and man cannot be happy without God. It is God who satisfieth the longing soul and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. The words, **"...man is become as one of us,"** (Gen. 3:22) may also be translated, "Man is become as one from Us." The thought is that of a break with God. Man cannot compete with God for sovereignty and still have fellowship and communion with Him. God will have no competitors. He will tolerate no rivals. He says, **"I am God, (and beside me) there is none else"** (Isa. 46:9).

Man cannot govern himself until he is first governed by God. To become independent of God is to become the slave of sin and Satan. Every form of human government has signally failed, because man cannot govern independent of God. Man broke with God and lost peace with his brother. There was strife and murder in the first family. Cain killed Abel. Men cannot be at war with God and live at peace among themselves.

Salvation Through Cooperation

God's competitors are ruined and need salvation. And this need has been provided in Christ, the Son of God. He cooperated with God in order to save God's competitors. The first Adam became a competitor and said, **"I will"** over against God's will; the last Adam was a co-operant and said, **"Not my will, but thy will be done."** He could say, **"I delight to do thy will, O my God,"** even though God's will led Him along the rough road of suffering through Gethsemane to the cross where He cried, **"...I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"** (John 17:4). The co-operant suffered for the competitor that He might bring us to God. Through faith in Christ the sinner is delivered from the condemnation of a competitor and receives the justification of a co-operant. Dear sinner, trust Christ as Saviour, surrender to Him as Lord, stack your arms of rebellion against God. From competitor to co-operant this is salvation.

From "24 sermons on Various Subjects" printed by Bryan Station Baptist Church



Let me be a sorrowing
sinner,
rather than a merry
sinner.

Let me rather sign for sin, than
sing in sin.

The sacrifices God loves best are
broken hearts for sin oppressed.

**"The sacrifices of God are a broken
spirit: a broken and a contrite
heart, O God, thou wilt not
despise"** (Psalm 51:17).



Quotes from Brother Ritechus N. Dignation

by Joseph Harris

SELF PROMOTERS

Nothing gets me mad as
hornets quicker than someone
who seeks recognition,
especially when that someone
is a preacher. I wonder if some
would do any ministry work at
all if they were told they would
never receive any glory or
recognition. There may be a lot
of pulpits empty next Sunday,
if the back patten' quit.

JUDGING

When someone tells you
to stop judging them, that
only God is their judge, it's a
sure thing they have been hit
smack between the eyes with
conviction. One day God will
judge them. That's when they
will wish you were their judge
instead.



We here at the Banner are looking for
audio copies of Elder Milburn Cockrell's
series on Revelation. We are specifically
looking for his teachings on Revelation
13:1-8. If you happen to have this audio,
please contact us through our email:
request@bereabaptistchurch.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Grace Baptist Church of Gladwin Michigan is seeking to start a mission work in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. We are also seeking a sound preacher to go there. If you are interested and feel led of the Lord please contact Pastor Sam Wilson at 989-701-5564. You may also contact Brother Tom Coffee, who is currently working in the area at 843-254-3018.

This ministry currently has a blog written by Bro Coffee that can be read online at <https://thefaithfulofgod.com/blog/>

The Maranatha Missionary Baptist Church located at 14460 Ravenna Avenue, Alliance, OH, 44601, is seeking a pastor. The church was organized in 1981 and currently has seven members that are grounded in sound Baptist doctrine. Any interested elder can contact Brother Denny Morgan at dennymatco@gmail.com or call (330) 324-3038.

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 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.

Should you have church announcements to share with the community please feel free to email them to us at request@bereabaptistchurch.org or you can call us here at 662-282-7794. Thank you and God bless!



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From the Mission Front



From left: Sis. Cecilia Constatino, Bro. Rolando Ebit, Pastor Reynaldo Cablao, Sis. Frances Anne Bautista, Sis. Fina Tud, Bro. Fernando Taylaran, Bro. Cedrick Abad, Bro. Dennis Rallos, Bro. Ramon Daton.

The Banner is back in the Philippines, praise the Lord!

We were contacted by Brother Joey Tud from Quezon City in the Philippines this past fall about possibly receiving the Banner at their church. One of the area pastors, Edwin Imperial, who is pictured below, had been a subscriber in the past, but since foreign postage had increased so much over the past years, it had become too much for him or Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie MS to continue.

I am overjoyed at the grace of our heavenly Father in that we not only have been able to reconnect with these dear brethren, but the church here was led to send these papers to them once a month at our own expense as a love offering!

Please join us in praying for this dear church, Calvary Baptist Church, San Jose Patag, Sta. Maria, Bulacan. Lord willing, we will continue to send these packages monthly as long as there are funds to do so. Their Pastor, Brother Rey (pictured above) is planning to attend a fellowship on March 31st in which he will be sharing copies with five other local pastors. May the Lord continue to use this work as He sees fit and may we continue to sing His praises, giving Him all of the honor and glory for it!

