

# The Berea Baptist Banner

Displaying Biblical truth for twenty-five years in the printed page.

## Eternal Life

By Gerald Price  
of Johnson City, Tennessee

John 17:2-3: “As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”



Life means many different things to many people. It may mean sports, sex, security, dancing, dining, and drinking or even religion. They will say, “This is the life,” but Jesus said, “This is life eternal” to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. Let us notice what the Bible says about eternal life.

### I. IT WAS PROMISED BY GOD BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN.

In this verse we find the eternal God made an eternal promise of eternal life in eternity. Since God is holy and never changes, it is impossible for Him to lie. He is faithful who promised and therefore, we have a sure and steadfast hope of eternal life. ◊ (Continued on page 143)

## Tongues Have Ceased The Scriptural Proof

By Lucien J. Le Sage Jr.  
of Pride, Louisiana

“Whether there be tongues, they shall cease...” (I Cor. 13:8). It is my belief that the Bible teaches that the Biblical gift of tongues has ceased for our present day, and I will attempt to show that the present day tongues movement is not the tongues of the 1<sup>st</sup> century Church.

It is remarkable to me that people can read I Corinthians chapters 12 through 14 and come away and say that Paul was encouraging the use of tongues rather than trying to wean the infant church



of the Apostolic age away from the use of tongues and prepare them for the time that they would cease.

### The Purpose of Signs and Wonders

We need to start by first establishing the Biblical basis for signs and wonders. The Jews had been under the Mosaic system of worship for ◊ (Continued on page 154)

## The Baptist Doctrine of the Church Is Not Sacerdotalism

By Raymond Bennett  
Ithaca, New York

I recently read a book entitled SACERDOTALISM AND THE BAPTISTS by the late Milburn Cockrell, a good friend and my former pastor. I thank God for men like him, who have the academic ability and the resources

to catch these heretical errors and alert us to them. Reading the book not only alerted me to an error that is creeping into our Baptist churches, but also caused me



to see, a little more clearly, why so many otherwise good Baptist believers, in the North East particularly, are so confused about our doctrine and therefore so adamant against it.

Sacerdotalism is the doctrine that makes the visible, local church a sacrament or a priest, restricting the Priesthood of the Believer to members of the church. Most specifically, it expresses itself in an extreme position of local church authority and proper baptism – an extreme that far exceeds the biblical formation of those two doctrines. It is apparent that the advocates of Sacerdotalism do not claim baptismal regeneration or that one must be in the church in order to be saved, as do such groups as the Campbellites, The

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## The Mind of Christ

By Wendell P. Furlong  
of Glasgow, Kentucky

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5).

A Christian is a personality in whom Christ dwells. A Christian believes what Christ believes and loves what Christ loves. A Christian is a heart through which Christ feels; a hand through which Christ helps, and a mind through which Christ thinks. A Christian is a life wholly yielded, wholly surrendered, wholly dedicated and consecrated to the Master's service.

Paul said, “For to me to live is Christ” (Phil. 1:21). “I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I live in the flesh I now live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

The Christian died to self. His ego is erased. The Christian is one through whom Christ lives His divine life. ◊ (Continued on page 148)

## Are You Forgiven?

By Ralph F. Becker  
(19??-19??)

Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. (Rom. 4:7)

Friend, I am writing to you today because time is short. The day of grace is fast slipping away. The great day of judgment is drawing nearer every hour. The thread of life is slowly but surely winding up. The sands of time for each of us will soon run down to rise no more. You and I are traveling far faster than we think through time towards eternity. Only a few more fleeting days and every soul of us will have gone forever to his own place of Heaven or Hell. Therefore I meet you in faithfulness and solemnness today and ask you only one question: Are you a forgiven soul?

The words of Scripture at the top of this page set forth the greatest blessing that can ever come to man. It is the

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## On Top of the World

By Milburn Cockrell  
(1941 - 2002)

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (I John 5:4-5).

Most people desire more than anything else to be “on top of the world” in our day. There is a country song called “On Top of the World” which expresses this longing in man. This is indeed a glorious goal but very few



seem to attain to it. All too many people are underneath the world. They believe themselves burdened, bruised and bamboozled by worldly circumstance. They suppose themselves harnessed and

bridled instead of sitting in the saddle themselves. Many are driven by their work instead of driving it. Most rich

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Not by your words alone,  
But by your actions show  
How much from Him you have received,  
How much to Him you owe.

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The purpose of the *Berea Baptist Banner* is as follows:

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

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new address. The post  
office charges us \$.70  
for each returned wrong  
address.

## On Top of the World

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men are not on top of the world; they are underneath their money bags.

But what an amazing truth is in my text. It tells us how to rule instead of being ruled---conquer instead of being conquered. It says in the language of a worldly man of today, "This is the way you can get on top of the world." In these discouraging days we need to learn the secret of John's words. We need to learn how God says we can get ahead, how to conquer the world, how to be a man at the top.

The Apostle John wrote after the fall of Jerusalem. Christians were scattered over the earth. The days of persecution had long since commenced. It was a dangerous thing in that day to be a Christian. Some were thrown to the lions and others driven to the catacombs for their worship services. Christians were battling privation, disease, hunger and doubt. In the midst of such a world the Apostle John lifts up his voice to his fellow believers: "We are not beaten; we are not slaves of fate; we are conquerors. We are masters of life; we shall overcome our circumstances; we are on top of the world, not beneath it! The secret of our triumph is our faith."

### THE CONFLICT---OVERCOMING THE WORLD

Three times in my text John spoke of he that **"overcometh the world."** What does John mean by the word **"world"**? I believe he means the Satanic world system in its precepts and customs which are opposed to God. He means the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (I John 2:16). He means the power of sin all around us and the evil of sin within our own nature.

### THE WORLD

The world John speaks concerning is the present world systems built by man under the leadership of Satan, the prince of this world (John 12:31). It includes its educational system, its commerce, its industries, its politics, its social institutions and its religions (I John 5:19 R.V.). The world hates Christ (John 7:7) and the Lord's people in general (John 17:14; 15:20). The design of the god of this world is to keep men's eyes blinded to the gospel of Christ (II Cor. 4:3-4).

Our conflict is with the society in which we live. We must be in the world and yet not of it. This is not a comfortable position. Christians must look upon the world as their foe. We must fight against it. We must contend with it until we overcome, or it will overcome us. Let us not be cowardly. Let us not flee from **"the good fight of faith"** (I Tim. 6:12). When we mingle among the men of the world, it must be as warriors who are aiming at victory. Let us put on the whole armor of God and engage at once in the act of

conquering. As fighters for victory, we must fight and never surrender until the hour of our death.

The princes of this world crucified our Savior (I Cor. 2:8). Do we dare have any fellowship with the murderers of our Lord? No, never! We must fight to break loose from the world's customs. We must war to rise above the dread of poverty, the greed of riches, the evil of personal pride, the fear of shame and the force of numbers. We must find our happiness in things above. We must fight to rise above the world's authority, example, religion, influence and spirit. We must obey a higher Master.

### THE DEVIL

The Christian faces a malicious foe, a fallen spirit, a powerful enemy. He is none other than the Devil or Satan. We must contend with subtle suggestions, with many an evil impulse, with many a misgivings about God---all of which have their origin with the Father of lies. The Christian life is a hand-to-hand combat with muscles strained to their utmost tension to defeat the Devil. Our eyes must be intently watching the foe who goes about **"seeking whom he may devour"** (I Pet. 5:8).

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: **"Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us"** (I Thess. 2:18). Does Paul mean by this saying that Satan stood across the road to Thessalonica to forbid his passage? No! He merely means some obstinate enemies prevented him from carrying out his intention of visiting his friends and converts in Thessalonica. Nevertheless, his keen insight pierced through this external circumstance and saw the concealed Satan acting as an adversary to the progress of the gospel of the grace of God.

### THE FLESH

As soon as a man becomes a true Christian and turns his face heavenward, he discovers an enemy within---himself---his depraved nature which is not removed in regeneration. Fleshly lusts **"war against the soul"** (I Pet. 2:11; Jas. 4:1). Sometimes the hardest battle is the fight within. Self wishes to be lord and forbids Christ from being Lord. We have to resist self. We must fight with the foes of our own household---with all that is within which wants to open the door to the many foes without.

All too many times we are looking out for number 1. There is nothing in the world so malignant and destructive as selfishness. It causes a man to live as if the world were made altogether for him, and not he for all the world. The real Christian must put God first, others second and himself last. The person, who pleases only himself, pleases a fool.

### THE CONQUERORS---BORN AGAIN BELIEVERS

The believer is born to conquer; he has a royal and ruling nature which was

given by the Holy Spirit in regeneration. The Divine nature of God is implanted in the soul. This nature alone undertakes the contest with the world. It alone can continue to battle the world.

The Christian has a conquering principle in him which sweeps difficulties out of the way. He has a new principle of life and activity within. He cannot be content with things as they are. He wants to make the world better than it is. He is opposed to everything that is unreal, all shams, and hypocrisies and to everything which is wrong. His new nature revolts against unrighteousness in any form. It makes him a warrior fighting to overthrow the kingdom of darkness and to establish a kingdom wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Why did John say **"whatsoever"** instead of **"whosoever"**? The Greek here can be: "Everything which is begotten of God," meaning that in every instance when one is truly born of God he enjoys victory over the world. The neuter affirms the universality of the idea more strongly than the masculine.

In our conflict we often meet with giants---the giant of sin, giant of error, giant of custom and the giant of heresy. During such times the battle rages fierce and long; nevertheless, the new nature, empowered by the Holy Spirit (I John 4:4), will always go on to victory. When the battle is over the new nature will have wholly overcome all its foes. The Creator cannot be overcome, nor any of those born of Him and who possess His nature. In every instance where one is truly regenerated by the Spirit there is victory over the world, according to my text. Those overcome by the world are not born of God.

### THE MEANS OF CONQUEST---OUR FAITH

The new nature does not overcome by inactivity. Rather, it overcomes the world, the flesh and the Devil by acting through a definite faith. Faith is the action or means by which the new nature conquers all enemies and lives to stand on top of the world. Faith appropriates Christ as the Conquering One and identifies us with Him. It causes us to enter into His strength and to share His victory. Faith united us to a conquering Christ Who goes forth conquering and to conquer.

Jesus Christ told His disciples: **"...be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"** (John 16:33). Our Savior overcame the prince of this world at Calvary and made him a defeated foe. Believing makes us one with Jesus Christ, the greatest of all world conquerors. Hence by faith we partake of His victory. **"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us"** (Rom. 8:37). Christ's victory is the Christian's victory. This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he spoke of **"the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who**

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## On Top of the World

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believe" (Eph. 1:19).

The overcomer is in Christ. He conquers the world in the strength of Christ. Out of Christ there is no spiritual victory---there is only disgrace, despair and defeat. It is altogether through the power of His death and His resurrection that we have strength to overcome. It is through Him that loved us we are conquerors, not by our sheer human energy alone, or our own loyalty and resolution.

But let us not take this positionalism too far. To do so is hyper-Calvinism, not Christianity. We must not say, "I am in Christ and therefore I need not fight the good fight of faith." Christ has saved us and given us a new nature which will fight against the world as long as we are in the world. Those in Christ are those now actively engaged in the Christian warfare. Yet while in the act of fighting, the Person of Christ will be in the act of conquering through us.

Without faith in Christ we have neither part nor lot in being on top of the world. The whole of our victory is connected with faith in Christ. **"All things are possible to him that believeth"** (Mark 9:23). **"According to your faith be it unto you"** (Matt. 9:29). **"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"** (Heb. 11:6). Faith is the means of our victory. It lays hold on the omnipotent arm of God; hence faith itself becomes omnipotent; it does wonders. Nothing is too hard for it to do, least of all overcoming the world.

God's formula has not changed. Only faith can give a man power to get on top of himself and the world. Only faith in Christ can give us the victory over fear, worry, pessimism and defeat. In all hard endeavors faith is three-quarters of the victory. The man without faith is whipped before he starts. But a man full of faith can say, "Fear not, I will overcome through Christ."

*Oh, for a faith that will not shrink,  
Though pressed by every foe,  
That will not tremble on the brink  
Of any earthly woe!*

*A faith that shines bright and clear  
When tempests rage without;  
That when in danger knows no fear,  
In darkness feels no doubt.*

Real faith is more than assent; it is active assent. What a man believes in moves him to act accordingly. Faith is a dynamic force that leads a man to do and dare and die. It is the daring of the soul to go further than the human eye can see; it makes us feel the presence of the invisible God. It makes a man work

no matter whatever the price may be. It is invincible; nothing can stop the efforts of faith. Neither Satan nor the sinners of the whole world can retard its march up to the hills of the glory land.

A transcendent faith, a cheerful trust, turns the darkness of night into a pillar of fire, and the cloud by day into a perpetual glory. The Christian who is full of faith is refreshed even in the wilderness and hears streams of gladness trickling among the rocks. By faith a believer sees the unseen reward which awaits, beholds a cloud of witnesses in the heavenly grandstand and perceives how Christ conquered the world, not for Himself, but for His followers. By faith the child of grace sees infinitely better delights approaching in the world to come. He sees the Celestial City, views the tree of life, beholds the golden streets, gazes upon the water of life, visualizes the gates of pearl, hears the songs of men and of angels above.

### THE CONTEST ENDED--- VICTORY

Men do not seem to know a real world conqueror when they see one. They think Alexander and Caesar were great world conquerors. But were men who put thousands of other men to death real world conquerors? I fear such men were really conquered by the god of this world. Jesus Christ is the Conqueror of all conquerors, the Warrior of all warriors! He met the world on its own battle ground and triumphed over it. Through faith in Him we share in this glorious victory. We also are more than conquerors through Him. We can join with the Apostle Paul in saying, **"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"** (I Cor. 15:57).

In wars or sports there must always be the losers and the winners. People fight or play to be on the winning side. They know victory is sweet. It has no substitute or equal. Let every believer **"war a good warfare"** (I Tim. 1:18). Soon we will have victory over all our sufferings and troubles. Let us hold high the blood-stained banner of King Emmanuel for victory is ours; we are on the winning side; we are well on the way to being on top of the world!

I know that Satan seems to have gained the upper hand. Even some professed believers have deserted our ranks. Others are already dead and gone on leaving our ranks empty to some degree. Today the air is filled with an uncertain sound and the smoke of battle has our eyes clouded

### DON'T MISS AN ISSUE

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a bit. Even some weary believers wonder how the battle goes as they hear the many shouts of the enemy. But it will not be long until the smoke will clear and the noise will cease so we may see we have whipped the prince of this world. In Christ our beloved Captain we shall stand at last on top of the world. In the end we shall all be greater conquerors than Alexander the Great. We will be on the winning side; we will not have fought a no-win war. There is "Victory Ahead."

*When the hosts of Israel, led by God,  
Round the walls of Jericho softly trod;  
Trusting in the Lord, they felt the conqueror's tread,  
By faith they saw the victory ahead.*

*David, with a shepherd's sling and five stones,  
Met the giant of the field all alone;  
Trusting in the Lord, he knew what God had said,  
By faith he saw the victory ahead.*

*Daniel prayed unto the Lord thrice each day,  
Then unto the lion's den led the way;  
Trusting in the Lord, he did not fear or dread,  
By faith he saw the victory ahead.*

*When like those who've gone before to that land,  
By death's river cold and dark I shall stand;  
Trusting in the Lord, I will not fear or dread,  
By faith I see the victory ahead.*

*Victory ahead! Victory ahead!  
Through the blood of Jesus, victory ahead;  
Trusting in the Lord, I hear the conquerors cry,  
By faith I see the victory ahead!*

----William Grum

### THE COWARDS

Some men have a yellow streak up their backs. They are fearful and afraid. Unbelievably they shrink from the fight and show no courage to do right. They think it easier for them to float with the tide of inclination than against it. They have not the courage to deny themselves anything; they will not do what is right if it cost them a struggle; they shirk every difficulty; refuse to bear the cross. They turn away from Christ because it is pleasanter to live a life of ease and self-gratification. The dishonest man finds it easier to be dishonest than honest, as he does not have to struggle with poverty. The liar lacks the courage to tell the truth and face the consequence. The sensualist finds it easier to live a life of unrestrained self-indulgence than to keep his body in subjection.

These people are lorded over by the world; the world has them under its thumb. They are the lost, the moral wrecks, the cowards of life, the willing slaves to Satan!

The unbeliever is certain to lose the battle. All the promises of God are yea and amen in Jesus Christ (II Cor. 1:20), but the spiritual coward has sundered himself from Christ by his unbelief. He has despised and rejected Him. There is no promise to him---no eternal life---no

salvation from sin---no being kept by the power of God---no promise of victory over the troubles of life---no **"triumph in Christ"** (II Cor. 2:14). Wherever there is faith there is victory. Without faith the battle is always lost to Satan! "Faith is the victory! Oh, glorious victory! That overcomes the world!"

*Encamped along the hills of light,  
Ye Christian soldiers, rise,  
And press the battle ere the night  
Shall veil the glowing skies;*

*Against the foe in vales below  
Let all our strength be hurled;  
Faith is the victory, we know,  
That overcomes the world.*

*Faith is the victory!  
Faith is the victory!  
Oh, glorious victory,  
That overcomes the world.*

## Eternal Life

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Think of the One who made the promise. He is supreme and sovereign, having all power in Heaven and upon the earth. Therefore, the promise is sure to all His seed.

### II. IT WAS PROMISED TO A CERTAIN PEOPLE BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN.

We notice in Titus 1:1 the statement **"According to the faith of God's elect."** Eternal life was promised to God's elect who were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, Eph. 1:4. Their names were written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Rev 13:8. **"This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life"** (1 John 2:25).

### III. THIS LIFE WAS PROMISED IN A CERTAIN PERSON, CHRIST JESUS, BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN.

Along with the Scriptures I have already used, we notice in I John 5:20, **"This is the true God, and eternal life,"** speaking of Christ. In II Tim. 1:1, we find, **"the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus."** The entire Bible makes it plain that eternal life is to be found in Christ Jesus only. **"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me"** (John 5:39). Jesus said, **"I am the life."**

### IV. THIS LIFE IS PRESENTED TO HIS PEOPLE THROUGH THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

Titus 1:3, **"But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour."** I Cor. 1:21, **"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by**

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## Eternal Life

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wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

When the Gentiles heard the gospel, Acts 13:48, they "glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." So regardless of what Hardshells say, sinners are saved by the preaching of the gospel.

### V. THIS LIFE IS POSSESSED AT PRESENT THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST.

John 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." John 5:24, also tells us that "He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life" "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." (John 6:47)

Many other Scriptures testify of this also. This signifies that we are now the children of God and have Eternal Life, as a present possession. The inward man has been born of God and shall never die. God the Father imputed my sins to His Son on the cross and He paid in full for me and when I as a poor, lost, guilty, convicted sinner, trusted Him as my Saviour, the Father imputed the perfect righteousness of His Son to me and I shall never come into condemnation for I have already passed from death unto life and God will never reverse this justification of a lost sinner. Therefore, our eternal life through and in Christ is sure.

### VI. WE PRESERVE UNTO THE FULLNESS OF ETERNAL LIFE IN THE AGES TO COME BECAUSE WE ARE PRESERVED UNTO LIFE ETERNAL.

Jude 1, "To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called."

We notice in John 10:27-28, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

In John, Chapter 6, verse 68, Peter mentions "the words of eternal life." In the following verses of this Chapter, we notice the words, "endureth," verse 27, "cometh," verse 37, and 45, "seeth," verse 40, "eateth," and "drinketh," verses 54 and 56 which denotes continued action and preservation.

We also find in verse 39, that He shall lose nothing but will raise up all His people in the resurrection at the last day, which shows His preservation and protection of His people. In Rom. 6:22, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Then in I Tim. 6:12, "Lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called."

### VII. THE PROSPECT OF ETERNAL LIFE AND WHAT WE

### CAN TAKE INTO IT.

Titus 1:2, "In hope of eternal life." What a blessing and glorious prospect for the children of God. After the resurrection and glorification of our bodies, we shall live in perfect fellowship with our Lord and Saviour in the ages upon ages without end.

Praise the Lord! Bless His Holy Name! John 4:36, says, we can gather fruit unto life eternal. By our witnessing, preaching, or making disciples, we can gather fruit unto eternal life. May God help us to be busy working for Him.

John 12:24-26 tells us that Christ did not die in vain, but His death shall bring forth much fruit. All of His people shall have eternal life, but the next two verses show us that we need that Cross experience in our lives if we would keep it unto life eternal. He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him, (II Tim 2:12). How we should hate the world, the flesh and the devil and love Christ more than parents, children, friends, wife, money and everything because He loved us and died to save us.

Oh, that we might have rewards, treasures in Heaven and crowns to throw down at His feet. Gal. 6:8-9, "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting, And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

May God bless all who can read this message and if I never meet you in this life, I shall meet you and have perfect fellowship with you in the life eternal.

(The Baptist Examiner, Dec. 21, 1968)

## Are You Forgiven?

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knowledge of the forgiveness of all sin. To have the conscious occurrence of this forgiveness is the only foundation for true happiness. But to be outwardly happy without this forgiveness as many people are, is to be like the condemned man singing carelessly in his prison cell, totally unconscious that the day of his execution is now dawning.

The forgiveness spoken of in this verse of Scripture you can never buy at any price. It is something that the fondest relative can never will to you. It is a blessing which can never be earned by good works though your sins be few and your deeds of merit be without number. No man or priest can ever bring you the forgiveness of sins. Yet in value this forgiveness is without price in earthly money. In the joy of possessing this heavenly treasure, earthly joys are altogether worthless. For this forgiveness of sins is the GIFT OF GOD. Friend, do

## Tune in to the Berea Baptist Broadcast

STATION	TIME	DIAL	WATTS
WFTA, Tupelo, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	101.9.....	3,000 FM
WCNA, Myrtle, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	95.9.....	3,000 FM
WCTT, Corbin, KY.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	680.....	5,000 AM
KARI, Blaine, WA.....	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m.....	550.....	5,000 AM
DXRA, Davao City, Philippines	Sunday 8:15 - 8:45 a.m.....	783 Khz....	10,000 AM

you have this forgiveness?

Perhaps by now you are thinking: "What do I need of such a forgiveness as you speak of? Whom have I injured, or whom have I cheated and wronged or defrauded so seriously as to need to be forgiven?" Right here is where so many go wrong. So, friend, beware! It is not man's forgiveness I am writing of. But are you forgiven in the sight of God? "For the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (I Sam. 16:7).

I write plainly because I feel deeply. To be without forgiveness is a dreadful thing. Forgiveness will not be granted to any after we leave the land of the living. There is no change that comes over the soul after death. No conversion ever comes beyond the grave. No new heart is ever given after our last breath. As we depart in the lonely and solemn hour of death so we abide, when time for us is to be no more. As we die, so are we forever. As the tree falls, so shall it lie. Each of us is either a forgiven or a lost soul now. Each one of us is either a forgiven or a lost soul forever. For Christ hath power only on earth to forgive sins (Mark 2:10).

Friend, if you are not now forgiven, you are in nature's sleep of guilt, and only Christ can awaken you (Eph. 5:14). You are blinded by Satan as to your great need and hopeless condition by nature (II Cor. 4:4). You are yet on that beautiful and broad, yet fatal way that leads to destruction (Matt. 7:13). Perhaps your friends and companions think you are all right, but death eternal lies at the end of your road (Prov. 16:25). If you have never had repentance towards God and never have had a personal faith in Jesus Christ, you are a lost and unforgiven soul (Acts 20:21).

This is the most solemn truth you will ever consider. No more important thought can ever occupy your mind. No greater issue will you ever have to decide. So let me lay before you three facts, which reveal with startling clearness why you need repentance and forgiveness above anything you can ever hope to have. May God's Spirit guide us as I seek to unfold these reasons. May He open your heart to realize the eternal worth of being a soul whom God for Christ's sake has forgiven.

### 1. GOD IS HOLY

We need forgiveness because God, whom we must all meet, is HOLY. Isaiah heard the Seraphim around the throne of God cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts," as though in His majestic presence they were unable to express the intensity of His holiness (Isa. 6:3). Job said, "Behold he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water." "His angels He charged with folly" (Job 15:15; 4:18). God is all-wise, all-mighty. He knows no variability, no shadow of turning (James 1:17). With Him there is no change (Heb. 13:8). He alone is immortal. He dwells in dazzling light no man can even approach unto; no man hath seen Him or can see Him (I Tim. 6:16). This same God with Whom we all have to do has said, "I am the LORD your God...be holy; for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44). The Spirit says, "He which hath called you is holy" (I Peter 1:15).

To such a holy God we shall all give an account of ourselves and our lives. It is appointed unto man once to die and after this, the judgment (Heb. 9:27; Rom. 14:12). He knows our every secret sin and requires that which is past (Eccl. 3:15). To Him shall we answer in the last day as to how we have treated His Son, Jesus Christ, and His message of forgiveness. To Him we must confess in that awful day, the true condition of our depraved and unbelieving hearts if we reject His claims upon us all our lives. This omnipotent and Holy One will one day judge every sinner in absolute righteousness according to his earthly attitude towards His Son. Every last soul must repent towards God and exercise faith in Jesus Christ, in this land of time, or perish forever. This is the decree of the second Person of the Holy Trinity. "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish," is His solemn word in Luke 13:3. Oh, may the Lord give you wisdom, friend, to see how fearfully important it will be at that last tribunal to be a forgiven soul.

### 2. WE ARE GUILTY

We need forgiveness because we are GUILTY OF A LIFETIME OF SIN, in the sight of this Holy God. I do not know whether or not you are clear of

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## Are You Forgiven?

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guilt against your fellow man. Each soul alone knows the secret sins he has hidden from others. I do not know what your friends, neighbors and relatives think of you. But before a thrice Holy God Who inhabits eternity, Who sees not as man seeth, Who alone is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of your heart and conscience, you are poor and wretched and naked and blind and hopeless in your guilt of unbelief, unless by grace you are a forgiven soul.

This guilt of impenitent unbelief is ours by inheritance, through our forefather, Adam, who believed the Devil and disobeyed God. We were born guilty, though man's pride denies it. Our natural hearts are so completely deceived by this guilt of sin we were born in, that our minds refuse to believe the Word of God about our lost condition. Rather we believe our own deluded heart which is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). But the unerring Word of the Living God is very plain in His decree: **"There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not"** (Eccl. 7:20). All our vaunted self-righteousness is laid forever in the dust by that Word of the Spirit: **"There is none righteous, no, not one"** - again: **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"** (Rom. 3:10, 23).

### 3. WE SHALL SOON DIE

We need forgiveness from God because we are soon, Ah yes, so very soon, going to DIE. We are all travelers here, through a brief time of life to an endless eternity. Daily we are reminded of the brevity of our stay here by the death of those we knew so well. Every soul of us can say with David: "There is but a step between me and death." The longest earthly life is soon over and gone. The strong as well as the weak, we see buried. The young and the old, the rich and the poor, the educated and refined, the famous and immoral, are solemnly lowered into their graves before our very eyes. The plague of sin and unbelief is in the heart of every man, and when it is finished it bringeth forth death (James 1:15). Yes, my friend, the sentence of death is now in that body of yours whether or not you like to think so (II Cor. 1:9). And which of us can tell at whose door the grim destroyer of the bodies of men is now waiting?

In the light of these three facts, the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man and the certainty of death, do you see why I ask you in all sincere affection: "Are you a forgiven soul?"

Are these facts I have written hard to believe, and harder to face? Be sure, it is better to face them now than hereafter when it is too late forever. It

is a most solemn thing to be unforgiven, and impenitent now. It will be terrible beyond the thoughts of men to be so in the hour when you shall stand without a Savior before the God against whom you have sinned, in the last judgment. **"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"** (Heb. 9:27).

Would you like to know you are a forgiven soul? Would you like to be at peace with God and know on the highest Authority your sins were forever removed from your wretched conscience? Would you like to know your guilty soul was safe by the assurance of God's own Word? Then let me point out to you some things about this blessing of forgiveness without which you must surely perish forever (I John 5:12).

The Scripture we have written at the head of this article show us that there is just one way to become a forgiven soul. We can only be forgiven by Him against Whom we have sinned. We can only become forgiven souls by **"repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Acts 20:21). Paul said, **"Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins"** (Acts 13:38). **"This man"** is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It is against Him we have sinned. To Him alone we must go in order to ever be forgiven. We must come to Him in brokenhearted repentance, confessing our sins here in time, or be unforgiven forever. There is no one else who can save your helpless soul but Him. Peter once said, **"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life"** (John 6:68). Again he said, **"Neither is**

**there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"** (Acts 4:12).

Many are they who would send you to good works and deep sincerity in some belief to earn your own salvation. Others would send you to ministers, but they cannot save you either. They can only point you to Him Who is the way. But alas, many of these ministers, not being forgiven themselves, are only false teachers, whose advice is a delusion. They, like the blind who lead the blind, will at last go out into a lost eternity, and their deceived church members will follow them. To trust such is to lean upon one whose remedies will utterly fail in the bitter end. Some would send you to the lodges of proud men to obtain a hope of eternal life. But these fraternities, though pretending much, can give the soul no true hope. They too are only founded upon the false imaginations and secret creeds and good works and rituals of men who love not the truth as it is in Christ, and who despise His sin atoning blood, and that one sacrifice He made which saves those who trust Him.

Some would send you to the Roman Catholic priest to be forgiven. But he, practicing his false Satanic Babylonish Pagan ritual, only loads down the poor sinner with more burdens which are grievous to be borne, and can promise him no eternal life at last. He will send you to masses, to confessions, to penance, and to worshipping Babylon's idols: the crucifix, the rosary and the queen of heaven. He will send you to worshipping

saints and relics and adoring Mary and Lady Fatima. He will make you wear scapulars and charms and beads. He will send you on pilgrimages to Rome's shrines and have you repeat numberless prayers and follow after mysterious superstitions and awe-inspiring ceremonies and ordinances. He will keep you in spiritual ignorance and bondage with his pagan mystery ritual, while he cleverly robs you of your money. And you will find in the end, all that the priest of Rome can do for you, is to bring to you an emotional form of heathen worship, which will never bring any lasting peace to your guilty and hopeless soul.

But dear friend, let me bring the comfort of this word to you: **"There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"** (I Tim. 2:5). Though vain are your works, though vain is the help of any creed or man at this moment, there is everlasting forgiveness for you if you come to Christ by faith in contrite repentance with no plea but that His blood was shed for you.

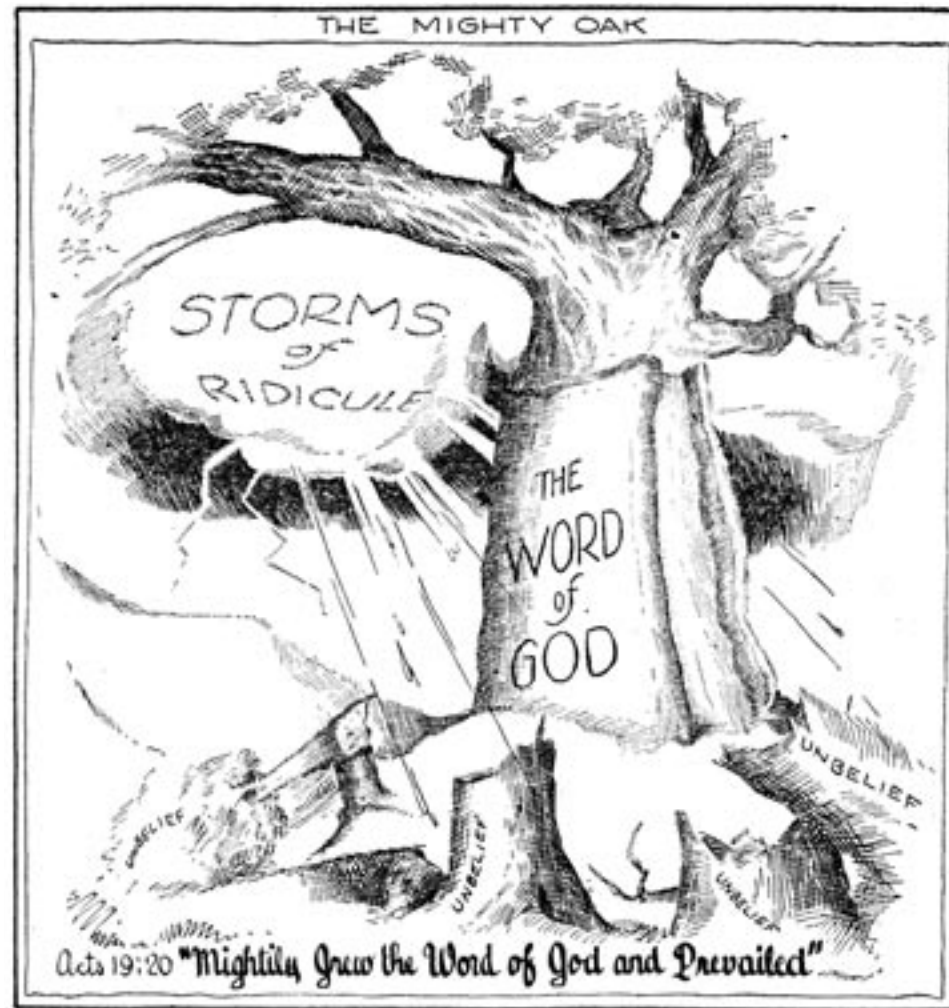
Are you troubled and inwardly saying: "I know I need to be forgiven; I know I have sinned against God; but how can I be sure I am justified in His sight?"

In the Word of God the Spirit makes the way of salvation so plain that even a fool cannot err therein (Isa. 35:8). Yet many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able, because they shall seek, alas! too late (Luke 13:24). And many, many others who have spent their lives saying: **"Lord, Lord,"** shall not enter Heaven either (Matt. 7:21). Yes, friend, there is a vast and fathomless difference between having a profession of salvation, and being a forgiven soul. Many, oh so many, have the former. They have a name to live and are dead (Rev. 3:1). Few comparatively are the latter, for few ever take the place of those who need forgiveness and know and feel they must eternally perish without it. Few ever find this way of God's forgiveness. Few of these walk in it. Fewer yet abide any time in it. And fewest of all prove by obeying God and serving Him unto the end of their days, that they have found God's forgiveness in the atonement of Christ.

In the PERSON OF CHRIST alone you will find forgiveness. He has opened a fountain of living waters to cleanse sinners (John 4:14). He has provided a garment of righteousness to clothe our spiritual nakedness (Luke 15). He is the bread of life that we may eat and live forever (John 6). He is the light which guides the repentant soul to Heaven (John 8:12). He is the Passover Lamb whose blood alone can stay the destroyer's hand (Ex. 12:13). To Him alone I would point you as the One who made the one and only sacrifice which could take away sin forever. (Heb. 9:26, 28)

To trust Him completely, to cast your

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## Are You Forgiven?

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repentant soul unreservedly on Christ by faith in His Word is salvation. The Spirit of God said long ago, **“When I see the blood, I will pass over you”** (Ex. 12:13). When God, Who is Holy, against whom you have sinned, whom you must soon meet, sees you trusting the Blood of Jesus alone for safety, He will pass over you. No charge will He ever bring against you, because Christ has died in your stead. Payment God will not twice demand, this at His bleeding Surety’s hand and then again at yours. Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission [forgiveness] of sins. Reader, are you a forgiven soul?

Jesus Christ Himself has purchased forgiveness for us with His own blood. By His death on the tree He paid the debt to God we never could pay. By His resurrection He has proved that God is now satisfied once for all with the payment He once made on the tree, and every repenting soul who trusts Him is free.

To make God’s forgiveness yours you must receive Christ by faith in His Word (John 1:12). You cannot see Christ now for He is in Heaven. You can never go to Him as you are. But He has left His own promise in His Word. **Look unto me, and be ye saved**” (Isa. 45:22). You can trust Him for having done what He says He has done. **“The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost”** (Luke 19:10). You can thankfully and humbly trust God’s Word that His Son Jesus was slain on Calvary’s tree in your stead and that His blood has forever atoned for your sins.

To thus trust your soul unreservedly to Christ is salvation. This is being saved by grace. This is being made a new creature in Christ. This is being justified by faith. To thus trust your soul to Christ for all that is past, for all that is now, for all that is before, is to be a forgiven soul. To do this shows you have been born again.

Reader, will you not gladly now leave your case in His loving hands? Will you not just now gladly believe that He died under God’s curse in your stead to set you free forever? Will you even now come by faith to Him, rest in Him, confide in Him, cling to Him, and forsake all other hopes? Then you can joyfully say with David of old: **“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered?”** (Ps. 32:1), and go on your way rejoicing, singing Newton’s wonderful song:

*I saw one hanging on a tree  
In agony and in blood*

*Who fixed His languid eyes on me  
As near His Cross I stood.*

*Sure never till my latest breath  
Can I forget that look.*

*It seemed to charge me with His death*

*Though not a word He spoke.*

*My conscience felt and owned my guilt  
And plunged me in despair.*

*I saw my sins His blood had spilt  
And helped to nail Him there.*

*A second look He gave which said,  
I freely all FORGIVE*

*My blood is for thy ransom paid;  
I die that thou mayest live.*

## The Baptist Doctrine

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Church of Christ, and some extremes of the Roman Catholic church, but they are so close to that position that it is very difficult to separate them.

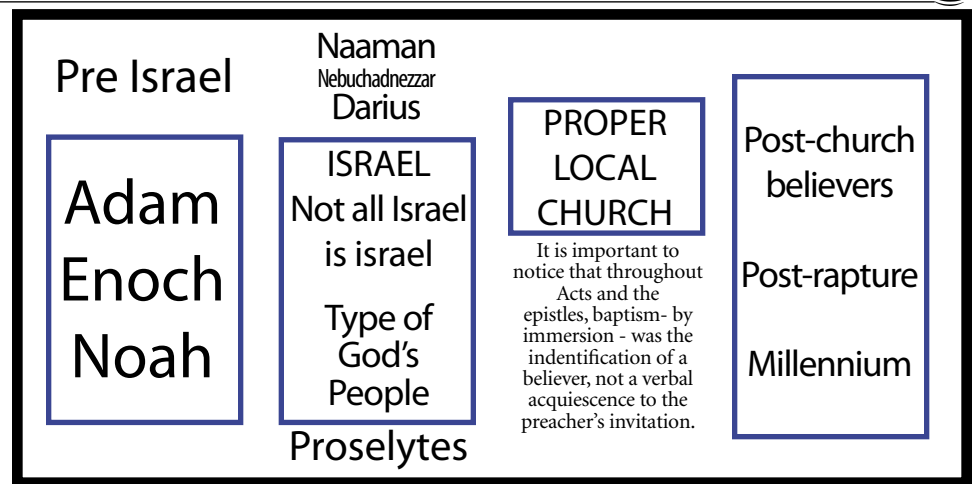
Reading about some of the extreme doctrines advocated by Sacerdotalism adherents reveals why those who hold to the Doctrine of the Church as per Jackson, Evens, and many others, find it so difficult to accept the teaching of the Landmark position, which is the position that has been presented in previous issues of *The Chosen Few*. It is easy to understand why those holding to the Reformed position of the church would argue against the Landmark position, but that has been covered in many previous issues of *The Chosen Few* and does not need to be rehashed here again now.

So we feel we must again put things in their proper order. We therefore submit these 8 reasons showing that Sacerdotalism is not Baptist. We present two charts, in this article, which the reader will want to refer to as we proceed.

1. Regeneration differs from categorical placement – Many who are so adamant against the doctrine of the local church, as opposed to a universal church see this doctrine in the extreme of the way Sacerdotalism teaches. They seem to feel that we are teaching that one must be baptized and join the church to be fully saved. This, we understand, is what the Campbellites teach, but it is *not* Baptist doctrine! *It is a complete, 180° reversal of Baptist doctrine!*

Salvation is a prerequisite of baptism and church membership, at least in a proper Baptist church that functions along biblical lines. It is sad that many ‘religious societies,’ claiming the name of ‘Baptist churches’ accept members without credible evidence of conversion and without proper baptism; serving them communion with the wrong elements, even open communion, and requiring little more, if any, than verbal acquiescence to a liturgical ritual.

Salvation brings one into the family, or kingdom, of God. **“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”** (John 3:3, italics mine.) As you will notice in chart 1, through out the ages there have been many believers, obviously saved by grace through faith,



### THE KINGDOM/FAMILY OF GOD - see John 3:3 Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God - Chart 1 -

who have never been part of either Israel or the church.

The Protestant and Reformed notion that all believers within a certain ‘dispensation’ are automatically in ‘the church universal’ is merely a human attempt to correct the Catholic error of a ‘visible’ universal church. Their doctrine would make Naaman, Darius, Noah, Enoch, and many others part of Israel; it would deny salvation to the Jewish proselytes that were denied full access to the Temple worship; and in the New Testament it would destroy the unity and purity of the church that was so fiercely protected in Acts and the epistles; and allow the same schismatic divisions that Paul denounced in 1 Corinthians. With a view to Eschatology, it would have the ‘church,’ ‘ruling with Christ’ but with no one to rule.

Yes, dear reader, a person can be saved without ever joining a Baptist church. Indeed, one must *be saved before even thinking* of joining a Baptist church.

2. The veil that was rent when Jesus died gave ALL believers access to the ‘Mercy Seat,’ hence the ‘Priesthood of the Believer.’ Most Protestants, and Baptists in particular, have always made a big thing about the ‘Priesthood of the believer.’ Both Peter and Paul make it clear that all saints are priests. Writing to believers scattered over the Roman Empire, Peter writes, **“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood... an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ”** (1 Pet. 2:5 & 9) Paul begs us, as believer priests, to **“present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service”** (Rom. 12:1)

Paul was writing to the believers who were members of the ‘church which was at Rome’ but this cannot be construed to mean that their priesthood activities were confined to the assembled church. Gathering together for worship was only one part of their ‘spiritual sacrifice.’ As priests, part of that ‘royal and holy priesthood,’ they could – and should – offer up their sacrifices of prayer and

praise, of dedication and commitment, and whatever effort was needed to ‘die unto Christ.’ Furthermore, each believer had – and has – the right and obligation to offer those sacrifices himself. He need not go through any form of human priesthood, man or organization. We have *one* High Priest, Jesus Christ. We pray in *His* name! That is the requirement for answered prayer. **“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”** (1 Tim. 2:5).

Neither I, your pastor, nor your fellow church member, can pray or offer sacrifice in your stead! We can, and will, pray *with* you and *for* you, but you must pray for yourself!

Even under the rigid priesthood laws of Israel, believers had access to God without going through the human priest. Hannah’s fervent; pathos filled prayer (1 Sam. 1:10-11) gives us ample evidence.

3. A believer receives the Holy Spirit upon regeneration not upon church membership. It is the Holy Spirit that regenerates, convicts, gives faith, and instructs the new believer. John 16 outlines a 4-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit and only one of those ministries (teaching) can even slightly be construed to be through the church. Even that one is in no way confined to the church.

John 16:7-13, **“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”**

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# The Baptist Doctrine

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Notice, the Holy Spirit will “reprove” (ελεγχο - elegcho - to convict, refute, confute) the world, first of sin, then of the righteousness of God, then of the judgment to come. He will use the Word of God (Heb. 4:12), the testimony of the church, and He will use the auspices of a preacher (Rom. 10:14) whether that preacher is preaching from the pulpit of a church building or is the individual Christian, witnessing over the backyard fence.

Too many churches today, particularly in Sovereign Grace circles, have construed the Sunday morning worship service as the place to evangelize. This is not to say that evangelism should not be done there, but it is to say that the church – by definition – is a gathering of saved, baptized believers. They gather for worship and teaching. (Cf. Eph. 4:11-14) Evangelism takes place elsewhere.

I suspect that it is this feature, coupled with the Augustinian doctrine of ‘compelle intrare’, that has been a major factor in developing a Sacerdotalism attitude in our churches even if not in actual taught doctrine. Too many rank and file church members are not taught and able to lead someone to Christ. They ‘bring their friends to church’ so the preacher can lead them to Christ. Thus, in practice even if not in doctrine, we have almost made our churches to be the ‘sacrament’ by which one is brought to salvation.

4. The Priesthood of the Believer is related to but is different than Individual Soul Liberty. We have already said enough on this point so all that is necessary here is to point out that the ‘Priesthood of the Believer, is the believer’s freedom to come to God on his own, through Jesus Christ. Individual Soul Liberty might just as well be expressed ‘Individual Soul Responsibility’. It is the individual’s personal freedom and responsibility to believe or not to believe; or to obey or not to obey. Conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit – in the believer. The believer is taught in and through the church, but he or she must believe or act according to his or her own convictions.

The church cannot dictate the private lives of her members. There are some religious groups that try to do so, even checking member’s checking accounts to see how they spend their money, but those groups are neither churches nor Christian.

5. The Jew, Gentile, and the Church of God. Many have made the statement that, in God’s eyes at least, there are only two kinds of people, the saved and the unsaved; or only two ‘races’, Jew and Gentile. But in writing to the church at Corinth Paul defines three groups, the Jew, the Gentile, and the church of

God. 1 Cor. 10:32, “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.” Here he sets the ‘church of God’ in contradistinction to all others, but by including the “Jew”, he does not seem to be merely separating the church from unbelievers but rather as a separate entity. Lest anyone see this verse as supporting the universal church theory we would remind the reader that at that time there was no recognition of Christians apart from their having joined the local church in their town. Denominational schisms and ‘free lance’ believers hadn’t come to be.

The church at Corinth is being cautioned to avoid offending the Jews, the Gentiles in town (probably unbelievers) or other church members or sister churches. The local church does not lose its importance here, nor does it get elevated to the position of a corporate priest or priesthood.

6. Acts 2:38 and the regenerate thief. Untold arguments have been presented from various points of view concerning the place of baptism in the process of regeneration. The counter argument is usually the repentant thief whom our Lord told, “This day thou wilt be with me in paradise.” Without getting into dispensational arguments, we suggest that the thief was fully saved and that we will no doubt converse with him in glory. He obviously didn’t join the church or submit to baptism. All of this was according to God’s sovereign plan! The thief is of no less glory than Paul or any of the Apostles. He fit into God’s grace and plan exactly where God wanted him to be. He has just as much of the Holy Spirit as the greatest preacher in the greatest Baptist church.

We repeat that baptism and church membership are not prerequisites of salvation, of receiving the Holy Spirit, or of being believer priests! Christ’s atoning work on the cross secured the salvation for every saved person from Adam to eternity! But we suggest that the church, which is the Bride of Christ, is that special relationship, apart from the rest of the family of God, as and for Christ’s own glory and pleasure – much like as, in a good marriage, a man has that special intimate relationship with his wife that he has with no other family member or friend.

But that relationship does not lessen his love for the other family members or friends! The wife has a special place in the heart of her husband, has privileges that no other has, and also has responsibilities that no other has. Thus it is with the church, the Bride of Christ. She submits to His authority in love, not in duty or under force as would a concubine or hired lover. Her obedience is an expression of love, respect, belief, and trust.

The believer who submits to baptism, proper church membership, church authority, and proper communion is

Non citizens - under Roman authority by virtue of Roman Empire  
No citizenship rights - at the mercy of Roman rule.

Citizens of Rome - afforded rights & privileges not available to noncitizens

## THE ECCLESSIA - THE CHURCH

First had to be citizens  
Called out of the citizenry  
Required structure  
Had to be duly authorized  
by Rome meeting Roman  
standards & requirements

First must be saved  
Called out of the saved  
Required structure  
Must be duly authorized  
by Christ, meeting NT  
standards and requirements

Believers who by choice or discipline are not members of a local church

The unsaved - to the kingdom of God as non citizens were to Roman Empire

## THE CHURCH - as per the Roman ‘Ecclesia’ Chart 2

expressing his/her love for Christ (and other believers (John 13:34; 15:12, 17) by his/her respect, belief, and trusting obedience to the Word of God.

A good wife honors and obeys her husband, often refusing to ‘do her own thing’ or even do things as she might rather do differently. The believer who adamantly rejects the biblical position of the local church, baptism, faithful attendance, etc. is showing a lack of sufficient love, respect, and obedience to Christ to be His Bride. The wise man wrote, “It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman” (Prov. 21:19). I’m sure our Lord does not want a contentious and angry bride.

7. Sovereignty applies to all, not just initial salvation. This writer has never ceased to be amazed at the way so many ‘Sovereign Grace’ people are so quick to forget the sovereignty of God when we get away from initial salvation. We hold fast to the concept that depraved man cannot and will not believe the gospel unless the Holy Spirit reveals it to him. We hold fast to our Lord’s perfect right to choose some out of the race of fallen man – by grace alone, completely apart from merit - to love and save. “And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated” (Rom. 9:10-13).

We have no problem with a sovereign God giving commandments and standards which that chosen and loved people must obey as a part of being His ‘particular, chosen people.’

But yet so many refuse to grant our Lord the right to sovereignly choose a bride for Himself, out of the family of God. Abraham sought a bride for Isaac, not out of the people among whom he dwelt

but out of the ‘family of his father.’

Consider the ‘3:9 ratio’ in the 12. When we read, “having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end” (John 13:1), do we think He had less love for Nathaniel and Philip than He had for Peter and John? Do we feel He had less love for Thomas than for James? Yet He had an obvious, uncontested, and unmerited, special relationship with Peter, James, and John. These three were allowed special times with the Lord that the 9 were not privy to. Only those three were allowed at the raising of Jairus’ daughter. Only those three were privy to the transfiguration. And in the time of our Lord’s greatest passion, it was these three that our Lord took with Him into the garden to pray with Him, leaving the 9 on the outskirts (Mark 14:32-3).

Dare we claim the Lord was being unfair? God forbid! Dare we affirm that the 9 were less loved, less saved, or had less of the Holy Spirit? God forbid! Dare we impinge upon our Lord’s sovereign right to have a special intimacy with a chosen few? God forbid! And you will notice that though every disciple had an important and vital part in both the earthly ministry of Christ and the ministry of the early church, these three were set apart for special responsibility and privilege. James was honored as the first Christian martyr. John was allowed to see and write about the consummation of the age. Peter was the ‘Apostle to the Jews.’

The 9 were used of God and loved of God, but spared the special cup given to these three to drink. Remember, when James and John asked for special seats in the kingdom to come, our Lord asked them, “Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” And He told them, “Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized with shall ye be baptized.” (Mark 10:38-39).

◊ (Continued on page 148)

## The Baptist Doctrine

(Continued from page 147) ♦

Remember that our Lord said of Paul, **“For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake”** (Acts 9:16). Like those three special disciples, Paul’s special ministry, special glory, and special suffering were by the sovereign choice of God. See chart 2. The ‘ecclesia’ is chosen at the choice of the authority; the Roman ecclesia by the rulers of Rome; the Lord’s ecclesia by the Lord. To each ecclesia there was granted and assigned, its own purpose, authority, and glory – along with the responsibility and suffering that came with it.

The Roman citizen had to meet certain qualifications to be part of the ecclesia, but in so doing they were no more or less full citizens of Rome. To be a part of ‘The Lord’s Ecclesia’ one must also meet certain qualifications, and accept assigned purpose and responsibility before receiving the authority and glory. Sometimes those qualifications demand humble submission and obedience and a certain amount of suffering at the hands of the world – and even other Christians who have not been chosen, not been qualified, and are not willing to submit to the commands of God.

Jesus said, **“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me”** (Matt. 16:24), and the discerning reader will notice that this is right in the heels of His announcement of His church and the authority/responsibility assigned to it. We ask the reader, **“Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”**

8. Bride’s position in relationship to the rest of the family. This point also has been touched throughout this message, so little more needs to be said here. We have discussed the difference between the bride and other family members, and pointed out that the special intimacy and position of the Bride does not detract from the Groom’s love for the rest of the family; that she is chosen at the will of the Groom; and that she had to meet requirements and standards that no other woman had to meet. Likewise the Bride of Christ.

It is a position to be desired, and to a degree earned, yet she attains that position by the mercy and grace of God, not by her own merit. Ezekiel 16 gives a beautiful picture of how the Lord provides all that is needed to meet the bride’s requirements – He has made her what she is and now brings her to Himself in that loving relationship.

With another view to eschatology, we see her as co-regent with Christ as the Queen is co-regent with the King. We see her in Revelation 19:7-8 & 21:2, arrayed in glory, but please note, as we have so frequently pointed out and the

thundering diction of the King James is so clear (and accurate to the Greek grammar), **“and his wife hath made herself ready.”** We ask the reader, have you made yourself ready?

This message has been primarily directed to believers, but this question brings the *unsaved* into the forefront as well. Again, see chart 2. The ‘ecclesia’ the ‘church,’ the ‘Bride’ is chosen out of the citizenry of Rome, out of the kingdom or family of God. Before you can consider the Bride you must first be saved. Have you; will you now, put your trust and faith for salvation in Jesus Christ alone? Has the Holy Spirit revealed to you that Christ died for you; that He did all that was needed, and that you can add nothing – and must not try?

### CONCLUSIONS:

The doctrine of the ‘local’ church carries with it some problems because of the term ‘local.’ We suggest that the term ‘local’ has been attached only to clarify the difference from the error of the ‘universal’ church. *Neither* term appears in scriptural usage. As we have pointed out so many times, there *was* no such debate in the early church.

For believers in apostolic times it was almost an automatic thing that when they identified with Christ they were baptized (immersed, not sprinkled) and joined the church in the area where they were. There were then, and are now, occasions when members of a church in a certain city did not live in that city. As soon as possible they started a church in the place where they were. They weren’t all specially authorized missionaries, but like Cornelius (Acts 10) they bore testimony to God and gathered people together to hear the Word of God. This missionary lives 1100 miles from the church where his membership lies.

In this case, he is an authorized missionary of that church and still under the authority of that church. In some cases people are miles from their ‘home’ church because there is no church in their area of like doctrine and practice. In these situations the term ‘local’ seems a little out of place, but we retain the term because, even though we may all be in the ‘family or kingdom of God,’ we are *not* members of a ‘universal’ church which has no doctrinal statement, no covenant, no known membership, and no functioning service, but we are members of a specific local church that meets all the requirements we have taught in this message and many others.

Unfortunately, then as now, the finitude of mortal men prevented them really knowing the hearts of those who professed to be saved, so some unsaved people were taken into church membership, even as they are today. The incident of Simon, in Acts 8 gives us an illustration and John’s words (1 John 2:19), **“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of**

**us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us”** gives us further evidence of unsaved people that had joined the church of God but left, evidently of their own free will, because their nature didn’t fit in the holy society of saved people.

Church discipline, as taught and practiced in those early churches, both weeded out the pseudo-believers and those that just needed discipline because they weren’t willing to be obedient to the Word and principles of God. It tested the reality of the faith and conversion of the one disciplined. If a true believer, they would repent. If not, they would remain out of the fellowship of God. But those that were truly saved were moved to repentance and restored to membership (1 Cor. 5:1-6; 2 Cor 2:6-7). While they were outside the active membership of the church they were still saved. Had they died in that position, they would still have gone to heaven, but without the blessings and special role of the Bride of Christ.

Divisions sprang up among professing believers (cf. 1 Cor 1 & 3) that eventually led to church splits and doctrinal differences. Churches that would not follow Apostolic leading and teaching became apostate (cf. Rev. 2 & 3) until Christ was virtually expelled from that which was called a church (cf. Rev. 3:20, **“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock”**), even though *some* of the people in those apostate churches were evidently true believers.

But those apostate churches, like so many so-called churches today, were not the true church; were not proper churches; and were (are) not the Bride of Christ. To those within their ranks that *are* saved, the Lord’s call is the same today as it was then, and will be in the future, **“Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues”** (Rev. 18:4).

Dear reader, if God has granted you spiritual life and faith to believe that Christ’s vicarious sacrifice on the cross was for *you*, and that His death didn’t just make your salvation possible but actually secured it; If your trust is purely based on the work of Christ alone – not depending on some small part that *you* have done; Then you are just as saved as I – you are just as much indwelt by the Holy Spirit as I am – you are just as much of a believer priest as I am – and you have full and free access to the throne of grace in prayer.

No matter how much emphasis we put on proper baptism, proper church membership, and proper worship, the lack of these things do not mar your position as a born again child of God. These are issues of *obedience* to the Word of God as God grants you understanding and light.

*However, we must emphasize again that obedience to known truth is a prerequisite to*

*understanding more truth!*

I must warn you, however, that if your faith depends on *your* decision, a note on the flyleaf of your Bible, or a prayer you repeated after the evangelist, you are on ‘thin ice.’ If there is no evidence of obedience, no change in heart or attitude, you are on slippery ground.

As our Lord so frequently said, **“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”**

The doctrine of a universal church blinds people to their need of salvation because:

1. It implies a universal salvation, often for any who will merely articulate an academic confession that Jesus Christ is Savior, rarely recognizing Him as Lord;

2. It offers all the rewards of heaven to anyone who goes to any ‘church,’ making no difference in correct doctrine and practice;

3. It makes proper doctrine and practice a ‘divisive’ factor, not a unifying factor;

4. And it removes the need or unity of local church worship and ‘gathering together’ (cf. Heb. 10:25).

## The Mind of Christ

(Continued from page 141) ♦

This is especially true in the realm of intellectual existence. *“For to me to think is Christ.”* Mentally, as well as morally, I am dead to self. *“Nevertheless I think; yet not I, but Christ thinketh through me; and the thoughts which I now think in the flesh I think by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”* To the Christian, there is no line of demarcation between the realms of mentality and morality, the domains of thought and life. Christ is sovereign and master of all. Christ reigns and rules in the mental as well as in the moral sphere. Christ is our wisdom as well as our righteousness. **“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption”** (1 Cor. 1:30).

Bro. Milburn R. Cockrell, a devout Christian said, “I think my thoughts after God. That is the way--the only way--to true intellectual eminence. The freethinker is fooling himself when he presumes that the Christian loses liberty of thought by obediently believing the revelation of God. The fact is that true liberty is achieved only by trusting and believing and obeying the God of all wisdom. By faith, we are permitted to soar to heavenly heights of divine wisdom. By faith, we are permitted to enter into knowledge of eternal truth.” **“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”** (1 Cor. 2:14). The person who has rejected the gift

♦ (Continued on page 149)



## Bits of Wisdom for the Young and Old

Realizing the need for more good writers in our Baptist churches, the editor has established this section of the paper for those who are just beginning to engage in religious writing. I would urge both young or older writers to use this space in the BBB. Such articles must be at least one page (approximately 500 words) and should not exceed three pages. Please submit your articles to the Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855.

### Searching for Truth in II Peter 2:1

By David G. Hoffman  
of Gatesville, Texas

There are those who assume the word **"Lord"** in our text is referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. And in so assuming teach that our text proves Christ bought all mankind; and that those bought have the power to deny Him.

I heartily disagree. I do not care to argue, however, I do care to prayerfully, and diligently search the Scriptures --in the Spirit of the Bereans-- whether the things I write are so. But I am just a man, and as such, am prone to make mistakes. So, please do not take this study at face value, but in the God inspired words of the Apostle Paul, **"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good"** (I Thess. 5:21).

Let's begin with a preliminary study of the English word **"Lord"** as found in the New Testament. Using the Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, I found there are four Greek words translated as **"Lord"**: #1203 *despotes*; #2961 *kyrieno*; #2962 *kyrios*; and #4462 *rhabboni*.

#1203 *despotes*---master; Sovereign Lord:-Lord/lord [5], masters [4], master's all [1].

#2961 *kyrieno*---to lord over, be master of, have authority over, one who rules or exercises authority; note in some contexts there is an implication that the authority exercised is harsh:-Lord/lord [1], dominion over [1], exercise lordship over [1], hath dominion over [1], exercise lordship over [1], hath dominion over [1], have dominion over [1], lords [1], over [1].

#2962 *kyrious*---lord, master. This can be a title of address to a person of higher status, "lord, sir"; a master of property or slaves; or a NT translation of Hebrew #136\* "Lord," or #3068\* "LORD," that is "Yahweh," the proper name of God in the OT:-Lord/lord[703], Lord's/lord's[15], sir[11], masters[8], master[4], lords[3], God[1], masters'[1], owners[1], sirs[1].

#4462 *rhabboni*---Rabboni, a title of a teacher:-Lord [1], Rabboni [1].

The word in our text is #1203, so there is where we shall focus our attention. However, I think it's necessary to acknowledge the other three to show the significance of #1203 in the six verses where it clearly denotes deity. The remaining four verses using this word do not denote deity.

The first verse using #1203 to denote deity is Luke 2:29. The context of verse 25-26 and 30-31 make it clear Simeon is speaking to God the Father.

The next verse is Acts 4:24. The context of this verse, too, makes it clear God the Father is being spoken to, for He is the creator of all things.

The next verse is Jude 4. This verse is significant because it clearly distinguishes a difference between #1203 and #2962. The first clause, **"Lord God,"** is #1203, but the second clause, **"Lord Jesus Christ,"** is #2962. There can be no doubt #1203 in this verse is denoting God the Father too.

The next verse is Revelation 6:10. If we read from 6:1 down to 6:11, it may seem this word **"Lord"** is referring to the Lamb of verse one. But please note, the English word **"Lord"** is found 22 times in the book of Revelation. Only one of which is #1203, and here to denotes God the Father. Why else would the Apostle use #1262 twenty-one times, then switch to #1203 out of the blue if not to make a distinction from the Lamb of verse one?

The next verse is II Timothy 2:21, which translates #1203 as *"master's."* Here in chapter two #2962 is translated 3 times as **"Lord,"** then a distinction is made in v. 21 by using #1203 being translated as *"master's."* #2962 is translated in other verses as *"master," "masters,"* and *"masters'"* ---so again the Apostle is making a distinction between the two. I believe the context shows #1203 is referring to God the Father here, too.

The final verse #1203 denotes deity in our text, II Peter 2:1. The question is whether #1203 here refers to God the Father, or the Son. Those opposed to the Sovereignty of God say it refers to Jesus Christ. I beg to differ.

Comparing Scripture with Scripture and allowing the Bible to define itself -- I can only conclude that #1203 denotes God the Father. In each verse using this Greek word we find no indication that it ever refers to Jesus Christ. Thus the clause, **"denying the Lord that bought them,"** cannot be referring the the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

It does, however, refer to a purchase made by God the Father. And if you'll bear with me, I'll endeavor to show you what it was He bought. The following Old Testament verses should be sufficient evidence for us to see just what God the Father **"bought,"** and what is being referred to in II Peter 2:1: Exodus 6:6; 15:13; Deuteronomy 7:8; 13:5; 15:15;

32:6; I Chronicles 17:21; Nehemiah 1:10; Psalm 107:2; Isaiah 43:1; 43:3; 44:22-24; 48:20; 62:12; 63:4; 63:9; Jeremiah 31:11; Hosea 7:13; Micah 4:10; 6:4; and Zechariah 10:8.

This is a substantial, but by no means an exhaustive, list of verses showing that God the Father definitely **"bought"** the nation of Israel, His chosen people, by redeeming them from Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria.

Now, getting back to our text, there is no doubt the Apostle Peter is talking to a group of Jews, and as members of the nation of Israel were **"bought"** by God the Father as noted above. See especially, Deuteronomy 32:6 and Isaiah 43:3.

In conclusion, by a preponderance of the evidence stated above --which can be obtained independently by diligent study of the Scripture aided by a good concordance and Hebrew/Greek language references-- we find:

II Peter 2:1 does not imply these **"false teachers"** were ever **"bought"** by Jesus Christ as some falsely teach. It does, however, show us --rightly divided-- they were bought by God the Father as members of the nation of Israel when He redeemed Israel from their enemies as outlined above.

Arminians wrest this text to their own destruction to try and prove "free-will" when it simply doesn't exist.

I pray my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ uses this study as He sees fit. Any errors herein are wholly my own.

*Author's note: All Greek numbers, words, & definitions from the Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 21st Century Edition, 2001. \*The numbers given in the Strong's definition are G/K numbers, I converted them to Strong's numbers for simplification.*

## The Mind of Christ

(Continued from page 148) ♦

of spiritual discernment, which is ours through faith in Jesus Christ; the man who refuses to walk in the light of eternal truth; the man who refuses to believe the revelation of God--he is the one who lacks real intellectual liberty, he is the one who is imprisoned in ignorance; he is the one who stumbles in darkness. There is no liberty in denying; there is no liberty in doubting; there is true liberty only in believing--in knowing.

The wisdom of the world is foolishness and folly compared to the wisdom of God. The knowledge of the natural world is intellectual bankruptcy when put beside the knowledge of the supernatural. The truth which is achieved through the science laboratory is insignificant and worthless when considered with the truth which comes from God. **"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your**

**ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts"** (Isa.55:8-9).

God's thoughts are not our thoughts and are indeed as much higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth, yet we may think them after him. What a sublime and blessed privilege! What an opportunity to attain a comprehension of Heavenly Truth! Only the most irrational of the rationalists will argue that one loses his intellectual liberty when he ascends on the wings of faith to supernatural heights in his thinking. One might as well contend that the bird loses his freedom by making use of his wings to attain altitude in his flight! Man does not lose, he gains, intellectual freedom and altitude when he humbly leans upon the resources of heavenly truth. It is still true that one man and God make a majority. The dullest individual who believes God and unites himself intellectually with supreme wisdom is infinitely wiser than all mankind who rely upon their own wisdom. Proverbs 3:5-6. The most ignorant person who "thinks God's thoughts after Him" becomes the intellectual superior of the most highly educated person who relies upon their own understanding. The weakest-minded individual who believes the Bible knows more than the greatest brain which always denies the revelation of God. The person considered stupid, who by faith possesses the gift of spiritual discernment is able to comprehend more than the greatest scientist who is confined in the range and realm of naturalism. The Christian finds innate mental inequalities entirely unimportant and irrelevant.

God is no respecter of persons. He giveth wisdom abundantly to all men who ask of Him through faith in Jesus Christ. Through Christ, all men can become intellectual equals. By believing and trusting and obeying God, all men have access to eternal truth. All souls are equal before God: that is the basis of a system of justice which makes all men equal in their individual rights. All minds are equal before God: Christianity refuses to permit the fixing of intellectual strata among men. Through prayer, the individual is able to transcend his own limitations. Through Christ, the individual is made a partner with God. He becomes **"joint-heirs with Christ"** (Rom. 8:17), (II Pet. 1:4-10).

*Repentance is a flower  
that grows not in nature's  
garden.*



*Christians, the highway to  
comfort is to mind comfort  
less and duty more.*

# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

*Satan is not omnipresent, so who tempts the individual Christians? - Texas*

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This is a good question and though quite easily answered it is a frequent problem for many Christians. We are too steeped in traditional teaching and understanding, so often expressed by the old Flip Wilson quip, "The Devil made me do it."

The first thing we need to remember is that 'Satan' is a title, not his name. His name is Lucifer (Isa 14:12). He is the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10; cf. Job 1 & 2), the instigator of the first and primary sin, the leader of the demonic forces, and the enemy of God. But the questioner is right! He is not omnipresent.

There are a few instances recorded in the Bible when Satan was the direct tempter of someone. He was the direct tempter of Eve in the garden, of Job, and of our Lord as He began His earthly ministry. It is said that he entered into Judas (John 13:27). He is also sometimes the direct tempter of saints, but I suggest only in special cases as illustrated in Peter (Matt. 16:23 Mark 8:33; Luke 4:8; 22:31).

We frequently speak of 'satanic' opposition but we would be more biblically correct using the term 'demonic' opposition. Satan has legions of fallen angels in his service (Luke 8:30), more properly called 'demons.' Herein is the answer to this question. In instances such as Matt. 4 (the temptation of Jesus), inspired Scripture uses the term "Diabolos" (the chief of demons) but in all but one other instance the term "daimon" or "diamonion" is used, which would be better translated "demon."

These 'demons' are evil spirits, thought to be the fallen angels that followed Lucifer in the original fall but differentiated from the spirits referred to in II Pet. 2:4 and Jude 4. The latter are seen as bound and restricted while the former are free to go about and are able to indwell both man and beast. Despite the ridicule of modern academia, their existence is abundantly verified in Holy Writ.

It needs to be emphasized here that these demons cannot indwell a born again saint because a truly born again saint is indwelt by the Holy Spirit! (1 John 4:4) But these demons, or evil

spirits, are one of the main sources of temptation, oppression, and opposition to the believer. But there is often a greater source of temptation to the believer, namely his or her own lusts and desires. **"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death"** (James 1:14-15).

We tend to give the devil too much credit! Satan himself has been affected by his fall and his power limited. I Cor. 10:13 clearly addresses this question (cf. Job 1 & 2). We are not allowed to be tempted, even by our own lusts, beyond our ability to resist and we are always given a "way to escape." **"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."**

This compounds the nature of our sin because a) we hide behind satanic, or demonic, temptation as an excuse for our own lack of self-discipline, b) Scripture asserts that we, as believers, actually were able to withstand the temptation, and c) we failed to utilize the divinely provided **"way to escape."**

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**"...the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"** (I Pet. 5:8).

This question brings to head a subject where there is much misunderstanding. Phraseology like "the devil made me do it" has caused people to have the misconception that Satan is omnipresent and that all tempting comes from him. Obviously, I Pet. 5:8 informs us that Satan is looking for any people he can cause to stumble and sin. Despite the fact that he is presently **"the god of this world"** (II Cor. 4:4), he is not the True and Living Almighty God of the Bible. He does not possess God's attributes. He is not **"in every place, beholding the evil and the good"** (Pro. 15:3). If he is going to tempt more than one person at a time, he is going to need help. His help comes from **"his angels"** (Matt. 25:41). These

angels fell with him. Apparently, there is some type of angelic hierarchy among the non-elect angels as there is with the elect angels. It seems that Satan is the head of this hierarchy. He uses these angels (also called devils and demons) to tempt both the saved and the lost.

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The believer's greatest enemies are the flesh, the world, and the Devil. Fleshly lusts daily war against our souls which is why we are instructed to crucify and mortify the desires of the old Adamic nature. James 1:14-16 states: **"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren."** Satan does not need to be present for temptation to occur. Any of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21) can stir unholy passions within the depraved nature of the old man. In order to fight the temptations of the flesh we must daily obey the admonition recorded in Ephesians 4:22-24: **"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."**

The world system that is diametrically opposed to God and His ways is constantly finding a variety of means to bombard people with temptations that appeal to their base nature. We must ever beware of the subtle ways in which the world seeks to steal our affection from God. I John 2:14-17 states: **"I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that**

**doeth the will of God abideth for ever."**

Satan is alive and well. He is also a formidable foe along with the principalities and powers that do his bidding. Satan is not alone in his war against God and His people. He has enlisted others in his quest to usurp the authority of God. Ephesians 6:10-12 advises the saints how to wage spiritual warfare against Satan and his minions: **"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."**

Temptation comes from within (the flesh), from without (the world), and from spiritual adversaries (Satan and his emissaries). The greatest source of temptation comes from the flesh and the world combined. Let us learn to take heed to the warnings of Scripture so that we can resist temptations as they are presented on a daily basis.

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**"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed"** (James 1:14). Perhaps we give Satan too much credit. James says in this passage that we are tempted when we are drawn away in our own lust and enticed. This doesn't mean that Satan may not tempt individuals, he does. But he does not personally have to be present for anyone to be tempted. We are tempted with our own lusts even if Satan is not present.

The Word of God does call Satan the tempter, and he has certainly tempted and deceived many. He does not have to be omnipresent in order to do this. He can deceive multitudes in the same way false prophets or politicians do. If they are not omnipresent yet are able to deceive many, how much more do you think Satan is capable of?

We do not know exactly how strong or powerful Satan is, but we do know that compared to God he is trivial. I personally think one of Satan's tactics is to make us think he is stronger than he really is. Many Christians are worried about the power of the Devil, but God tells us to **"resist the devil, and he will flee from you"** (James 4:7). It's not that we should be careless or apathetic about the devil, for we read in I Peter

◊ (Continued on page 154)

# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

To fulfill Old Testament typology of blood being sprinkled on the mercy seat wouldn't Christ's blood have to be sprinkled on the mercy seat? If so, was this done at the crucifixion or at another time? - Mississippi

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This is a lengthy and difficult question. I fear it will be difficult to answer this question satisfactorily in the allotted space in such a forum as this.

We need to see four points in order to answer this question but they are so intertwined that they all must be discussed together. We need to see the 'heavenly tabernacle' after which the Old Testament tabernacle was patterned; the Day of atonement and how it pictures the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord; the 'temple in heaven' that John saw in the Revelation, and the parallel (not analogy) that the writer of Hebrews draws. That's a big order! May our Lord be pleased to grant us understanding!

The reader is referred to some lengthy passages of Scripture (Ex. 25:40; Lev. 16:2-26; Ezek. 40-44; Heb. 8:1-6; 9:1-28; Rev. 5:8) of which we will only quote 5 verses here.

**"And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount"** (Ex. 25:40).

**"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;...It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us"** (Heb. 9:11; 23-24).

**"And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled"** (Rev. 15:8).

We need to remember that the worship, as outlined in the Law of Moses, that portion of the law we refer to as 'the ceremonial law', is all typology, a figure of the true, bringing the spiritual realities of heaven and the, then future, ministry of Christ into a format that finite, mortal man could see and grasp.

From the very beginning of Jewish worship, the temple was given as a picture

of that which was in Heaven (Ex. 25:40). The rituals of the Old Testament worship were but practices designed by God to show forth the total commitment and innocent sacrifice of Christ. The 'Holy of Holies' was but a representation of the holiness of God and the inability of sinful man to reach Him apart from the pure, vicarious, blood sacrifice of an innocent substitute.

The 'pattern' after which Moses was to build the Tabernacle, coupled with the 'Temple' that John saw in his vision of glory (Rev. 15:8) make it evident that there is a Temple in Heaven, whether spiritual or material we cannot say with assurance. But there is a temple in glory!

The temple of Ezekiel's vision (40-44) seems to also picture that heavenly temple. Some have taught that Ezekiel's temple vision is the temple of the millennium. This writer will not venture to debate that point either way, but some (even Baptists) have taught that the Jews will again be offering animal sacrifices in the millennial temple, supposedly looking back to the sacrifice of Christ. We categorically reject that concept, considering such sacrifices nothing more than the 're-crucifying' of Christ as in the Catholic mass. *Christ's blood was shed once for all and never needs to be done again!* It may be, however, that we will celebrate the Lord's Supper in Heaven because our Lord implies that He will drink of the cup (the fruit of the vine) again when the Kingdom of God is fully come (Luke 22:18).

The Hebrews passage seems to answer this question best.

When Christ died, the temple veil was rent from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). The Old Testament temple worship was then abolished, the typology having been fulfilled in Christ and the way into the Holy of Holies was now open to any and all who would come in proper heart worship. The only remaining part of the typology at that point in time was the actual sprinkling of the blood on the mercy seat.

For this we need to look at the 'Day of Atonement' and the parallelism that the writer of Hebrews draws for us.

The High Priest's entering of the Holy of Holies typified Christ's burial. Burial, of course, represents death, in this case, Christ's death and shed blood. **"For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof"** (Lev. 17:14). It was this that the blood sprinkled on the altar typified, that is the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. So the three days and nights

in the tomb were not just idle time, but Christ's offering, i.e.: sprinkling of His blood, on the heavenly altar.

Had the offering brought by the High Priest been unsatisfactory, he would have been struck dead there. The High Priest's coming out from the Holy of Holies typifies our Lord's resurrection – proof positive that the offering had been accepted. Our Lord's resurrection was the proof positive that His offering on our behalf had been accepted and therefore our sins forgiven.

The parallel that the writer of Hebrews draws fits here. As the High Priest entered a tabernacle, 'made with hands' to offer a temporary sacrifice (the sprinkling of the bullock's blood on the altar), Christ, our High Priest, entered into a tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say heaven itself, and sprinkled His own blood on the altar seen so frequently in Revelation, as a permanent sacrifice, in that heavenly tabernacle after which the earthly tabernacle was patterned.

**"It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these"** (Heb. 9:23).

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Christ's blood was never sprinkled on the mercy seat that God commanded Moses to build (Exodus 25:17-22). Christ Himself is the true Mercy Seat, anticipated and portrayed in type or figure by the Old Testament mercy seat. In Hebrews 8:5; 9:9; 10:1 we see that the tabernacle, priesthood, and sacrifices were all figures and shadows of realities in Christ.

Concerning the mercy seat, Exodus 25:22 says, **"and there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony..."** The mercy seat, therefore, was the place where God would meet and commune with His people.

We find then that Christ is our true Mercy Seat, because He has entered into the heavens and lives forever to make intercession for His people (Hebrews 7:25). We have access to God only

through Him Who is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Hebrews 4:14, 16 reads "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession..." "...Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." All believers have access to the true Mercy Seat in Christ. There is no longer a need for the old, or it would still be here today.

In addition, we must always be careful how we judge the things of God. On what basis do we decide how Old Testament typology must be fulfilled? By what standard do we apply judgment? We cannot simply use human reasoning here, but must submit ourselves to the Word of God. The book of Hebrews explains in great detail how the Old Covenant types are fulfilled in Christ, and I recommend studying this book in great detail to better understand this subject.

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The efficacy of Christ's redeeming work satisfied all of the law's demands when He died, was buried, and rose again. The offering of His shed blood was accepted by the Father as the only means of reconciling the elect to God. The language of Scripture is clear. Christ offering Himself as our righteous substitute is what in effect puts away our sin and gives us a right standing with God. Our salvation is not bound up in a ceremony or the precise fulfillment of Old Testament types and shadows. Rather it is the finished work of the Saviour alone that saves us. Hebrews 9:24-26 declares: **"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."**

When Jesus appeared to Mary after His resurrection He said unto her "... Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17). We know that later on in the same chapter

◊ (Continued on page 154)

# The Tithe

## Part 2

(Continued from last issue)

By Philip C. Parks  
of Flint, Texas

### VI. TITHING DURING NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

#### (1) OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES FOR NEW TESTAMENT TITHING



Many will argue that tithing is not a command for New Testament saints. One of their arguments is that tithing was established by Old Testament law and we, today, are under no obligation to tithe for we **"are not under the law, but under grace"** (Rom. 6:14). This argument sounds correct until a thorough research of Scriptures is done.

Remember, tithing was practiced long before the law was given. Abram and Jacob tithed of all they possessed. Scripture proofs are already supplied. If these great Godly men tithed, we should consider this more than an implication that we must do so as well. Their giving of the tenth part should be our standard.

Davis W. Huckabee's comment<sup>2</sup> is worthy of quoting for our present point as he expounds on Genesis 14:18-20: "This text gives the first record of tithing, and it was some four hundred years before the giving of the law to Moses, for Abraham lived four hundred years before Moses (Gal. 3:16-17). However, nothing is said in the Genesis text to show that this was a new thing even in Abraham's day.

"What is suggested, is that inasmuch as Abraham is the **'father of all them that believe'**, (Rom. 4:11) and Melchizedek was an outstanding type of Christ (Heb. 7:1), therefore Abraham's paying of tithes is an example to believers today, who are to tithe to the representative of Christ, the local assembly.

"We must remember that Bible examples are equally as authoritative as commands where there are no commands to the contrary."

#### (2) TITHE FROM THE GROSS

We should tithe from the gross income. Our gross income is that amount we've earned before any deductions are withheld including federal and state taxes, social security and other such deductions subtracted by governmental authority.

Someone may say that the taxes withheld from our income are not within our power and actually never belonged to us at all. Therefore we are not required to tithe from this deduction.

I've wrestled with this question over the years until the answer was provided

me by Doctor Elton McCann, my professor who taught a seminary course I took titled Christian Ministry and Finance. Doctor McCann pointed out that when we drive on paved highways, and are secure both at home and abroad because of our police and military, and when we have fire protection, a sound government and a myriad of other federal benefits, we have in effect "bought" these things for our advantage. Therefore the tax we pay is money that belongs to us and money we spend indirectly.

If an argument is raised that a tithe should not be given from our tax deductions because one does not agree with the manner our government spends money, this argument can be quickly refuted as well. Our Lord countered this argument by stating: **"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's"** (Matt. 22:21).

Apostle Paul also commended paying taxes for the government's rightful use in Romans 13:5-6: **"Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also."**

If anyone had a right to complain about paying taxes it would be Apostle Paul. It was taxes that paid for the Roman soldiers which confined him. It was taxes which paid for his imprisonment. It was taxes which paid for his manner of death of martyrdom.

The tithe should be given from these deductions as well. It would be interesting to calculate the spiritual and worldly wealth benefits we all would receive if we tithed to the Lord the same percentage as that which is taken from our gross income in the form of taxes. Certainly our God would be much more benevolent and gracious to His saints than our government is to its citizens.

#### (3) SCRIPTURES WHICH SUPPORT TITHING FROM THE GROSS

Abel is most likely the very first to appreciate tithing of his gross increase for it is recorded that he gave unto God before he himself benefited from that which was left: **"And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering"** (Gen. 4:4). Because of Abel's unselfishness, God had respect for Abel.

Proverbs 3:9 speaks of tithing from the gross by stating: **"Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase."** An obvious promise of recouping far more than that which is given by tithing is recorded in the following verse: **"So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."**

Be careful not to interpret this verse too literally for our definition of a "full barn" may differ from that which is God's. But we can be certain that tithing with the proper attitude will somehow return its blessings over and above that

which we anticipated.

### VII. NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES WHICH INDIRECTLY SUPPORT TITHING/GIVING

It is previously pointed out that specific New Testament passages cannot be found which command the saint during our current church dispensation to tithe.

Although Christ and all the other writers of the New Testament never commanded us to tithe, they strongly endorsed and encouraged the practice of giving to the church. In fact, they actually clearly stated that we, according to the knowledge that Christ gave His all for us, are indebted much more than a mere tenth.

Call it the tithe, offering, or simply giving, New Testament saints continue to have the responsibility of giving to the Lord.

One such scripture proof of Christ giving His all is I Peter 3:18: **"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh."** Many more Scriptures support this premise as well.

The following references imply the practice of tithing.

#### (1) LUKE 21:4

Christ highly commended the widow for **"she of her penury (poverty; destitution) hath cast in all the living that she had."** It sounds like this poor widow not only gave her required ten percent to God but her other ninety percent as well. She may be a far greater example of tithing/giving than Abraham or Jacob.

#### (2) ACTS 4:34-35

Luke, when writing the Acts of the Apostles recorded how the Jerusalem church gave sacrificially: **"Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."**

#### (3) I CORINTHIANS 9:14

Another proof of our necessity to tithe is found here. Paul writes: **"Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."** The context in which this verse is placed states that churches are obligated to financially support their pastors. This gives pastors the luxury to devote their lives **"continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word"** (Acts 6:4b) without the distraction, interruption, and inconvenience of the necessity to providing for their own support through secular means.

Paul verified this by pointing out that the Old Testament Levites' income and subsistence was garnered by the tithes and offerings of the people. **"Do ye not**

**know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?"** (v. 13). The same was true for the churches' pastors, for since they preach the gospel, they **"should live of the gospel."** John Gill's comment regarding this phrase is: "the sense is, that in consideration and because of their preaching the Gospel, they should be supplied with the proper necessities of life."<sup>3</sup>

#### (4) I CORINTHIANS 16:2

One more Scripture proof should suffice regarding tithing. Paul pleaded with many churches including the Corinthian Church to give of their resources to help the persecuted saints in Jerusalem: **"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."**<sup>1</sup>

Paul did not use the word "tithe." Instead he uses a much stronger word: **"liberality."** This word is translated from the Greek word "charis" meaning, in this context, "loving-kindness; bounty."<sup>4</sup> This type of giving expresses "the effect of the gracious disposition of the benefactor."<sup>5</sup>

This verse includes an added exhortation of regular tithing/giving: **"Upon the first day of the week."** Certainly the need to contribute to the welfare of the saints will always present itself. (See also Matthew 25:34-40; Acts 6:1-3, 20:35; Romans 12:8, 13; II Corinthians 8:14, 15; and others.)

This collection was a church-wide effort, not to be confused with an individual, private venture of giving over and above that which is given/tithed in the church.

### VIII. BIBLICAL WARNINGS FOR REFRAINING FROM GIVING/TITHING

Certainly the reader knew this point would eventually be made. The following are just a few Scriptural references.

#### (1) AMOS 4:4

**"Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years."**

Through Amos's writing, God was expressing His anger toward His chosen people, not for their lack of tithing, but for their idolatrous tithing. Instead of tithing to God, they tithed to their idols. Giving tithes for idolatrous worship is the same as withholding tithes from the Lord. It is the same as robbing God. Adding insult to injury, they tithed to their idols in **"Bethel."** The name *Bethel* means "house of God."

This sin was pointed out in Malachi 3:8.

#### (2) MALACHI 3:8

**"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings."**

It is of equal evil and abomination to God when men withhold the required

◊ (Continued on page 153)

## The Tithe

(Continued from page 152) ♦

portion which God demands and hoards it unto themselves or offers it to a false god. This is true in our New Testament dispensation as our Lord says: **"Render therefore. . . unto God the things that are God's"** (Matt. 22:21). God demands the tithe even today.

(3) MATTHEW 6:1-2

**"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."**

It must immediately be made clear that the context of these verses deal with "alms" and not *tithing*. An *alms* is a charitable donation to the unfortunate and is accomplished voluntarily. A *tithe* is the required tenth which belongs to the Lord and is given to the church. The individual with a charitable mind decides when, where, how, and to whom his *alms* are distributed. The *tithe* is given strictly to the treasury of the church; the church, collectively, distributes its treasury to propagate to gospel. The alms is dispersed by the *individual* while the tithe is dispersed by the *church*.

So, how are these verses related to tithing? The answer is that many give both the alms and the tithe for one purpose: To selfishly exalt themselves. The Lord warned that those who do so receive a vain and temporary reward: the praise and **"glory"** (celebration; honor) of men."

The point must be made that alms are not given as a substitute or a place of the tithe. Tithe first, then give alms as the Lord leads. One should not have to *"feel led"* to tithe.

(4) II CORINTHIANS 9:6

**"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."**

This verse's context specifically points to the necessity of the church giving back to God a portion that He gave to them to support persecuted saints.

The point is taken that if we withhold the **"bounty"** (see verse five) which the Lord has given us, God will see fit to see that we, in turn, **"reap also sparingly."** If we give a little, God will see that we will have little to live on.

### IX. BIBLICAL EXHORTATIONS FOR GIVING/TITHING

This point begs to be made as well as the former. The following are just a few Scriptural references.

(1) MALACHI 3:10

**"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 windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."**

The LORD is begging us to **"prove"** Him in the matter of tithing. By returning unto God through monetarily supporting the Lord's work through proper tithing, our God, Who created and manipulates the universe at His pleasure, has promised that we will not be able to store all that which the Lord will return to us for our obedience and generosity.

This **"blessing"** will not always be in money nor in tangible objects. If His blessing is simply supplying us with inward joy, we will be far more content than the richest of all men.

(2) MATTHEW 6:3-4

**"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly."**

Again, this passage's context is about alms, not tithing [see explanation of VII. (3)]. It is within our fallen human nature for us to glorify ourselves by broadcasting what we do with our money. It is a method of demonstrating our fleshly pride.

Therefore, it is just as necessary for us to give our tithes in obedience to God in the same manner as we give our alms; secretly. By doing so, God receives the glory, not the giver. The irony is that God openly rewards the giver in His own magnificent way.

The following reference is further proof of this.

(3) LUKE 6:38

**"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete (measure) withal it shall be measured to you again."**

It could be argued whether this Scriptural passage's context regards alms or tithing or both. Verse forty-six is in the same discourse, and these are our Lord's words: **"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"** That they were calling Him **"Lord, Lord"** suggests they were addressing a religious matter regarding money, namely the tithe. (Giving alms is more of a material nature.) Certainly we call Him **"Lord"** and He demands we support His ministry. The Lord's ministry is carried out by His church in part through the resource of the tithe.

Christ instructs us that He will use the same standard of giving back to us that we use when determining what to give to others, including the church. Christ promises that our generosity to the church in tithes and offerings will begat His generosity to us in return.

If we're generous to the church He

will be generous to us. He will also be stingy toward us to reward us for our stinginess: **"For with the same measure that ye mete (measure) withal it shall be measured to you again."**

(4) II CORINTHIANS 9:7

**"Every man according as he purposeth (brings forward by choice) in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."**

The context of this verse is not in doubt for Apostle Paul is specifically speaking of giving to the church. The particular purpose at hand is to support the persecuted saints. Giving for such causes should be automatic and without the need for persuasion. This was in the minds of the Corinthian saints and Paul complimented them for their ease and swiftness in giving.

Meditation upon the passage should give one the understanding that this special giving was above and beyond the tithe. While the tithe is given to support the church and its pastor, this offering was given in addition to the tithe for it was going to a cause beyond the church's normal expenses.

### CONCLUSION

In our modern, New Testament dispensation, tithing is usually accomplished by giving money for that is what our economy is based upon. All of our increase is translated into this medium.

Giving/tithing money does not relinquish us of all other responsibilities or methods of supporting our church, its pastor, and church ministries. Tithing provides a resource for ministry but is by no means the sole resource. More personable resources should be considered as well.

Our time should be tithed. Ten percent of our daily activities should be dedicated and given to the Lord for He gives us our whole being. That equates to 2.4 hours daily that we should be fellowshiping with God in Bible reading, studying, meditation, prayer and other Christian activities.

Our abilities should be tithed. That which we do secularly can be translated into the holy plumbers, carpenters, gardeners, homemakers, etc. can use their talents for the upkeep of the church's property rather than hiring this work out. Tapping into the church's finances for property upkeep means less money spent for propagating the holy ministries of the church, especially preaching the gospel.

It should be confirmed that tithing is a necessary, yet minimal act of worship accomplished by God's people to demonstrate their love and appreciation to God for His gracious and bountiful supply.

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# Funnybone

"... A time to laugh..." (Eccl. 3:4).

## Pastor Brown's Church Etiquette

1. Come early. Rushing into the building at the last minute disrupts the service.
2. Take a seat toward the front of the auditorium. Leave the rear seats for those who must be late and for visitors. This is a common courtesy.
3. Be devout – the church building is not a place of amusement. You come to worship God, not to whisper, lounge, or sleep. God's house deserves utmost respect.
4. Always remember that strangers are guests of the church members. Treat them with the same courtesy you would if they should visit your home.
5. Never rush for the door after the benediction as though the house were on fire. Remain to speak and be spoken to.
6. Remember at all times that you are in the house of God, and act accordingly.

\*\*\*\*\*

Pastor Brown with great compassion and earnestness delivered a sermon upon eternal punishment.

On the next day the pastor was walking down the streets of Possum Trot when a man by the name of Tot Less thought to discuss the topic of the pastor's sermon.

Tot Less began his conversation, "Pastor Brown, I believe that there is a small dispute between you and me, and I



thought that I would talk this morning and try and settle it."

Pastor Brown said, "What is it?"

Tot Less replied, "Why, you said in your sermon yesterday that the woe of the finally impenitent will be eternal, and I do not think it will be so."

Pastor Brown spoke as he quickly took his Bible and opened it, "Oh, if that is all, there is no dispute between you and me. If you look here at the Scripture in Matthew 25:46, you will find that the dispute is between you and the Lord Jesus Christ, and I advise you go quickly and settle it with Him."

\*\*\*\*\*

Deacon Jones was watching his two young nephews one winter's day. While the two boys were house bound they decided to take the clock apart and put it back together again.

Early the following morning Deacon Jones was awakened from his sleep to hear the

clock striking forty-seven times without a break. He jumped out of bed and yelled, "Wake up Maw!" As he continued toward the bedroom door he yelled, "Wake up boys!"

As he stood there trying to get the sleep out of his eyes he explained, "It's later than we think, later than I ever heard it before!"

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11).

\*\*\*\*\*

It is told of a preacher who was visiting Possum Trot Baptist Church years ago that, on a hot summer's afternoon the congregation, like many other congregations during that time, got drowsy, and not a few of them went off into a regular doze.

The preacher went on, apparently undisturbed by the dozing congregation, and finished his sermon and paused for a moment.

The silence, as is often the case after the humdrum of a not very animated preacher, roused up the congregation. Some rubbing their eyes stared at the minister. He waited till he saw that most were fairly well awake and then very calmly said, "My good friends, this sermon cost me a good deal of labor, rather more than usual. You do not seem to have paid to it quite as much attention as it deserved. I think I will go over it again."

And with that said he was good to his word, from text to exhortation.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Tongues Have

(Continued from page 154) ◊

la mee ah" over and over. In the Acts of the Apostles we see that on the day of Pentecost that the disciples spoke in the native languages of men from other regions who had come to Jerusalem to worship as Jews. These devout Jewish men from various nations heard the disciples speak the wonderful works of God in their native tongue. "And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" (Acts 2:7-8). (See Acts 2:8-11 for the languages that they spoke.) The disciples spoke these languages without ever having learned them. I have heard it said that after a very young age, if a man learns another language, he speaks that language with an accent. Yet these men were amazed that the disciples, who were all Galileans, spoke their native languages as though they were the disciple's own language. "Are not all these which speak Galileans?" they asked. This was truly a sign and a wonder from God. Now, if no one could have understood the language,

then it would have been no sign at all. The fact that Biblical tongues was a human language that could be learned is evident in I Corinthians 14:16, 23-24 where the word "unlearned" is used for those who had not learned the tongue. It has also been pointed out by other writers on this subject, that expert linguists have examined recordings of modern tongues and say they are not languages of any kind. These same language scholars say that no more than two vowel sounds and very few syllable clusters are present, and that the sounds they make are related to their native language and not to another language and bear none of the marks of any possible language.

### What about Unknown Tongues?

In the King James Version the term "unknown tongue" is used several times in the translation of Paul's epistle to the Corinthians. However if you will notice, the word "unknown" is in *italics* which means the word is supplied by the translators and was not in the original Greek. The word is put there for clarification, yet it has led to confusion. The tongue was indeed "unknown" to the person speaking it, but was a known language to someone in the world. As we have already shown Biblical tongues were

languages used by or known to ethnic groups in the world. They are not some unknown language or gibberish.

### When did Biblical Tongues Cease?

I can remember in my early years of being a Christian that a young man, who was a song leader in the Baptist church I attended, made the statement that tongues had ceased when the Bible was completed, and I responded in a rebuking sort of way, "Where did you get that?" He couldn't give me a good answer, other than it was what he was taught. He had only heard that, and he couldn't give me a Biblical reason. I had hoped he could have, for I would have believed him. It was a few years later, under sound teaching in a sovereign grace Baptist church, that I learned that the young man was indeed right.

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put

away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (I Cor. 13:8-13).

Before we go any further let us point out that there will be a time when only the three gifts of faith, hope and charity will abide. In I Cor. 13:13 we read, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Concerning "charity" Paul had already said, "Charity never faileth" (I Cor. 13:8). The word "abideth" means to "remain" or "continue." When Paul said that prophecies would "fail" and special knowledge by revelation would "vanish away," he used a Greek word that meant to be "abolished" or "cease." He did not mean that the prophecies would fail to come to pass or be true, but that the gift of prophecy would cease in the church.

The fact that charity (love of God) is the only gift that will never fail, tells us that there will be a time in which all of the gifts are in existence. There will be another time when the three; faith, hope and charity are in existence. Then, finally when charity by itself will be in existence. The Charismatics that I have spoken with tell me that all the gifts are still in existence until Jesus returns, but there is a problem with that position, for when is the time of faith, hope and charity? When Jesus returns for me I will not need faith and hope. This is proven by the definitions that the Bible gives concerning both of these gifts. Concerning faith, we read in the book of Hebrews, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). When Jesus comes, I will see Him for myself and will no longer need to see Him through the eyes of faith. I realize that it may be argued that the disciples had faith when they were with Christ at His first coming; but at that time He came as a humble servant and many, especially the religious leaders of Israel, rejected Him as the Messiah. When He comes in glory there will be no question as to who He is. When God's people are glorified with Him the need for faith will have come to an end. Concerning hope we read, "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:24-25). The second coming of Jesus is that blessed hope. When Christ comes for me my hope will be realized and brought to fruition. At that time, when I see Him and I am with Him, I will only need the love of God for all eternity. These verses tell us that the time of faith, hope and charity in the church age must be before the Lord returns for His people. This means that tongues, prophecy and special

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## Tongues Have

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knowledge will be done away with before the return of Christ. Now, when is that time? Paul is telling us in his epistle to the Corinthians when that point in time will be. It is when **“that which is perfect is come”** (I Cor. 13:10). No wonder Paul said, **“Now abideth, faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”**

I know many interpret **“that which is perfect”** to be the coming of Jesus Christ and His millennial kingdom; but as we have just pointed out, the three gifts of faith, hope and charity must exist by themselves before His coming. And not only that, but also the word **“that”** suggests a thing and not a person. Why don't we let the Bible itself tell us what is the meaning of **“that which is perfect.”** According to the lexicon, the word perfect in the King James Version comes from a Greek word meaning: “brought to its end, finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness; full grown, adult, of full age, mature.” Now ask yourself, what was completed in this age before the Lord's return? Well, again, why don't we let the Bible tell us. In I Corinthians 13:11 we read, **“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”** This verse is immediately after the verse that mentions, **“that which is perfect”** which shows us that Paul means exactly what the lexicon says concerning the word **“perfect.”** And what were the childish things that Paul had in mind that would be put away when that which is perfect or complete had come? Well, it should be obvious to any reader that he was speaking of the early gifts of tongues, prophecy and special revelation knowledge given to the members of the infant church during the apostolic age. But, let's go on. If we look closely in the book of James we will see a sort of parallel to what Paul is writing about in chapter 13 so that we may clearly see what Paul meant by the words, **“that which is perfect.”**

### The Mirror of God's Word

In James chapter one, we read, **“For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed”** (James 1:23-25). Here we see that the word of God is called the **“perfect law of liberty.”** The Greek word used for **“perfect”** in James is the exact same word that Paul used for **“perfect”** in I Corinthians 13. We also see from James that the **“perfect**

**law of liberty”** is something that a man looks into as he would a **“looking glass”** or mirror. The word for **“glass”** in the book of James has the meaning of **“mirror”** according to the lexicon and is the same Greek word translated **“glass”** in I Cor. 13:12. When a man looks into a mirror, he sees himself. He comes **“face to face”** with himself. James says, **“For he beholdeth himself.”** Who else do you see when you look into a mirror? The Word of God is what reveals to us that we are depraved sinners and in desperate need of a savior. We would never come to that realization without looking into the **mirror of God's Word** and we would go on thinking that old lie, “we're not such a bad person.” The Bible tells us that **“there is none that doeth good, no, not one”** (Rom. 3:12). So, we see from James, that the Word of God is called **“the perfect law of liberty”** and is compared to a mirror or glass that someone would look into and behold his own self. Now if we take this understanding given in James and apply it to I Corinthians 13, then we will have a better understanding of what Paul is speaking of in his epistle to the Corinthians. Notice in I Cor. 13:9-12 that they only had revelation knowledge and prophecy in part or portion. They had only pieces of it and not the whole completed revelation. Paul said that they looked through a glass darkly at that time. Again, glass has the meaning of a mirror and the word **“through”** has not the idea of looking through it as it being transparent, but looking by means of it, or a channel. If you take a lexicon, you will see that is exactly what the meaning of **“through”** is here. Also, the word **“darkly”** in the King James Version means “obscured.” Now, if they at that time only had parts of God's revelation, then would not their vision be obscured? How can you look into a mirror that is only in pieces or parts and get a clear picture? When the mirror is complete, which James says is the Word of God, we get an un-obscured view of ourselves. Then I can perceive myself even as I am perceived through the mirror of God's completed Word. Notice that Paul says **“face to face”** in I Corinthians 13:12, but then says we shall **“know,”** and the word **“know”** means to perceive, even as I am known. In other words, I will perceive myself even as I am perceived. When you look into a mirror you see yourself as others see you. You are **“face to face”** with yourself. So, when we look into the mirror of God's completed Word (if we have been given eyes to see through the quickening of the Holy Spirit) we see ourselves as God sees us. Then we lose all self-righteousness and are compelled to flee to Christ.

### Is the Word of God Complete and is it Enough?

In the Book of Revelation we read, **“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book,**

**If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book”** (Rev. 22:18). Some will say that what is meant here is adding to the Book of Revelation and not to the Bible. Despite that argument, no one dares to add modern day “revelations” to the Bible. I guess false teachers will only take their “revelations” so far and dare not add their “words of prophecy” to the Bible. If God really has given men a word or a prophecy, then why don't we add it to the book? They won't dare do that, will they? Paul in his second letter to Timothy writes, **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”** (II Tim. 3:16-17). Paul says that all of the Scripture was enough to make the man of God perfect, or fully mature and thoroughly furnished. Sounds like the Scripture is enough for the man of God. It may not be enough for the carnal man and the sign seekers, but it is enough for the man of God. I know the Bible may not be enough for people that have to see something, or someone who needs to feel the carnal sensation of “warm honey flowing down [his] body from the tip of [his] head to the bottom of [his] feet,” as one young man told me of his experience when he spoke in tongues, but the Bible is enough for the man of God. When that which is perfect or complete is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

Some may argue that the gift of tongues was not **“that which is in part.”** This is true since the Bible said, **“we know in part and prophecy in part,”** but the gift of tongues was to cease along with prophecy and special knowledge. How does a person speak a tongue in part anyway? Yet prophecy could be a piece of the whole as also knowledge, and notice, tongues is sandwiched between knowledge and prophecy and is said to cease with them. If tongues are still in existence then so is the gift of prophecy and special revelation knowledge. Some will argue that prophecy is simply speaking God's Word, so that when we speak the Bible we are prophets in that sense. While this may be true, it does not appear that would apply here in Paul's epistle to the Corinthians. Are we to assume that when faith, hope and charity exist by themselves that we are not to speak God's Word? So then the word “prophecy” can not mean simply speaking God's written Word as it is used in I Corinthians 13. **“When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him”** (Deut. 18:22). It appears that one of the tests of false

prophets was whether the thing came to pass. The foretelling of the future along with edification is the sense of Paul's discourse on prophecy in his epistle to the Corinthian church. I have read that Benny Hinn had made a prophecy that Castro would die in the 1990's, yet Castro is still alive. He also prophesied that the homo-sexual community in America would be destroyed by fire in the 1990's, yet that did not happen either. Do not be afraid of Benny, he's just another false prophet with millions of followers. The lexicon says concerning the word translated prophecy in I Corinthians 13, “a discourse emanating from divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God, whether by reproving and admonishing the wicked, or comforting the afflicted, or revealing things hidden; especially by **foretelling future events.”** How do we declare God's purposes today? Do we receive direct revelation from God, as some claim; or do we simply go to God's Word, the Bible, to speak the mind of God? Is it “Sola Scriptura” or something more? Concerning the gift of prophecy, some will probably make the argument that the two witnesses that are mentioned in the Book of Revelation will **“prophecy a thousand two hundred and threescore days”** (Rev. 11:3). I believe the two witnesses that will prophesy in the book of Revelation are Old Testament prophets of Israel brought back to earth. The church will be gone at that time and God will be dealing with Israel again. The church age will be ended and it will be the time of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. The Jews reject the New Testament, and these two witnesses shall fulfill and complete the last book of the New Testament. They will not be adding to, but fulfilling what has been written in the Book of Revelation given by Jesus Christ to John. They will not be part of the church age. The church has the New Testament.

♦ (Continued in the next issue)

## “QUARAN”

By G. Russell Evans  
Norfolk, VA

*Newsweek* magazine has recently been under fire for its publication of the article about the desecration of the “Quaran.” This act has caused protests in Afghanistan and other countries in the world. *Newsweek* magazine then retracted the article as being an untrue statement.

The photograph in the newspaper was one of a Muslim cleric furious over the article. I have never seen such anger.

Christianity is based on “love” and not what I see as “hatred”---in the Islamic world. The Christian, in my opinion would not cause a riot or kill because the Bible was desecrated. The Christian religion does not teach violence or killing, as opposed to the Islamic teaching of “kill the infidel.”

The Arab world should face the truth and the Western world could learn the truth.



# THE BIBLE AND NEWSPAPER

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

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

## THOU SHALL STEAL

Five liberal Supreme Court justices joined last week to rule that the government can force families out of their homes to make way for real estate projects by private developers. The ruling sanctions theft by big government to benefit big business.

At issue was 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment language: "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation." In this case, *New London, Conn.*, was seeking to condemn private homes so private developers could build a hotel, health club and offices. The question was whether New London was taking the property for "public use"---formerly interpreted to mean government projects such as building a road---not taking property from one owner to give to another. Archliberal Jerry Ford appointed J.P. Stevens wrote the opinion. Clintonites Ruth Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer joined him, as did Bush senior's David Souter and Reagan appointee Anthony Kennedy. Sandra Day O'Connor, Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas and Chief Justice William Rehnquist dissented.

This is theft by government. But it is also something worse: It is a frontal assault on the primacy in our culture of the privately owned family home, the universally sought after symbol and stronghold of American liberty. In authorizing this larceny, the five justices in the court's majority---J. P. Stevens, Anthony Kennedy, Stephen Breyer, Ruth Ginsburg and David Souter---have revealed where true liberty ranks in the liberal judiciary's hierarchy of values.

If the Fort Trumbull families had been members of an endangered animal species, their homes might have been spared. Had New London tried to bulldoze bog-turtle habitat, liberal judges likely would have blocked it.

If the buildings had not been family homes, but "family planning clinics," where abortions were performed in the name of a "right to privacy," liberal judges would at least have been conflicted.

But because New London believes it can extract more tax money from a hotel-and-office development than it can from certain homes, the Supreme Court will let the city take the homes and destroy them. What a blighted view of public welfare New London and the court have adopted: An office building that can be built somewhere else---if there is a market for it---can never be as rich a community asset as the roots set down by Fort Trumbull's families.

Those families were loyal to New London, but New London was not loyal to them.

The value of a private home, in Fort Trumbull---or any American town---cannot be counted in dollars and cents. It is the sovereign territory, where law-abiding people

sit free and independent, beyond the reach of a constitutionally limited government.

Or so it used to be. (*Human Events*, July 4, 2005).

**"How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?"** (Ps. 82:2).

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## SUPREME COURT SENDS MIXED MESSAGES ABOUT TEN COMMANDMENTS

(EP)-In two decisions on June 27, the U.S. Supreme Court offered conflicting guidance to government officials about displaying the Ten Commandments on government property.

In the first ruling, a closely divided court said a 6-foot granite monument that proclaims "I AM the LORD thy God" outside the Texas Capitol can stand because it sits in a park that "suggests little or nothing of the sacred."

But a second decision struck down framed copies of the Ten Commandments in two Kentucky courthouses, even though it was surrounded by other nonreligious documents, because officials had previously stated their purpose was to promote religion.

The vote in both cases was 5-4.

Religious conservatives were almost uniformly disappointed in the rulings, saying that the real message is that older displays will probably be allowed to stay, but that it will be almost impossible to get new displays of the Ten Commandments erected.

Justice Stephen G. Breyer wrote that it is not that simple. "The court has found no single mechanical formula that can accurately draw the constitutional line in every case," wrote Justice Breyer, who was the only justice to vote with the majority in both cases.

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, often a swing vote, joined the liberals in both decisions.

The rulings mean thousands of Ten Commandments displays around the nation will come under scrutiny. In the days following the ruling, hundreds of media reports in local markets asked questions about local displays. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is preparing challenges to the displays in at least two dozen markets.

Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family said the rulings "tore a hole through the First Amendment," and that the nation is "very close to the point where sandblasters would have to be taken to just about every government building in Washington, D.C. - including the Supreme Court itself."

The Supreme Court's frieze depicts Moses as well as 17 other figures, including Hammurabi, Confucius, Napoleon, and Chief Justice John Marshall. Moses' tablets do not have any writing.

Jay Sekulow, chief counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice, told the Associated Press: "It is very encouraging that the Supreme Court understands the historical and legal significance of displaying the Ten Commandments. Unfortunately, the high court's decision in the Kentucky case is likely to create more questions."

Roy Moore, former chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court and the man often called the "Ten Commandments Judge," was disappointed in the rulings. "Clearly, history, logic, and law dictate that we can [display the Ten Commandments]. This court is simply ignoring the words of the First Amendment and ruling by their own feelings," Moore said in a prepared statement. "When you deny God, as this Court is doing, you slowly lose your rights to life, liberty and property."

The rulings were the court's first on the Ten Commandments since 1980, when the justices barred its display in public schools.

**"Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth"** (Ps. 78:1).

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## ORIGINAL MEANING OF 'PUBLIC USE'

If such "economic development" takings are for a "public use," any taking is, and the Court has erased the Public Use Clause from our Constitution, as Justice O'Connor powerfully argues in dissent. I do not believe that this Court can eliminate liberties expressly enumerated in the Constitution and therefore join her dissenting opinion. Regrettably, however, the Court's error runs deeper than this. Today's decision is simply the latest in a string of our cases construing the Public Use Clause to be a virtual nullity, without the slightest nod to its original meaning. In my view, the Public Use Clause, originally understood, is a meaningful limit on the government's eminent domain power. Our cases have strayed from that Clause's original meaning, and I would reconsider them. . . .

The most natural meaning of the Clause is that it allows the government to take property only if the government owns, or the public has a legal right to use, the property, as opposed to taking it for any public purpose or necessity whatsoever. At the time of the founding, dictionaries primarily defined the noun "use" as "the act of employing any thing to any purpose" (S. Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*). The term "use," moreover, "is from the Latin *utor*, which means 'to use, make use of, avail one's self of, employ, apply, enjoy, etc.'" (J. Lewis, *Law of Eminent Domain*). When the government takes property and gives it to a private individual, and the public has no right to use the property, it strains the language to say that the public is "employing" the property, regardless of the incidental benefits that might accrue to the public from the private use. The term "public use," then, means that either the government or its citizens as a whole must actually "employ" the taken property. . . .

I would revisit our Public Use Clause cases and consider returning to the original meaning of the Public Use Clause: that the government may take property only if it actually gives the public a legal right to use the property. ---Justice Clarence Thomas, dissenting in *Kelo v. New London*.

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## SOUTER'S PROPERTY

A businessman has asked the town of Weare, N.H., to seize the home of U. S. Supreme Court Justice David H. Souter in order to build a hotel and museum on the property.

Logan Darrow Clements on June 27 faxed a request to Chip Meany, Weare's code-enforcement officer, seeking to start the application process to build a hotel at 34 Cilley Hill Road, the site of Mr. Souter's home.

Justice Souter's vote in the *Kelo v. City of New London, Conn.*, decision allows city governments to take land from one private owner and give it to another if the government will generate greater tax revenue or other economic benefits when the land is developed by the new owner.

Mr. Clements, CEO of Freestar Media LLC, said the town would gain greater tax revenue and economic benefits with a hotel on 34 Cilley Hill Road than allowing Justice Souter to own the land.

The proposed development, called the Lost Liberty Hotel, would feature the Just Desserts Café and include a museum, open to the public, featuring a permanent exhibit on the loss of freedom in America, Mr. Clements said. Instead of a Gideon's Bible, each guest would receive a copy of Ayn Rand's novel "Atlas Shrugged."

Mr. Clements said the hotel must be built on this particular piece of land because it is a unique site, being the home of someone largely responsible for destroying property rights for all Americans.

"This is not a prank," Mr. Clements said. "The town of Weare has five people on the Board of Selectmen. If three of them vote to use the power of eminent domain to take this land from Mr. Souter; we can begin our hotel development." (*The Washington Times*, July 4-10, 2005).

**"..for the LORD God of recompences shall surely requite"** (Jer. 51:56).

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## FAREWELL \$40 BILLION

Lobbied by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, President Bush agreed last week to write off \$40 billion in debt owed by the regimes of 18 Third World nations. The \$40 billion was lent to these regimes by the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The governments let off the hook are: Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

Taxpayers in the U.S. and other G-8 member nations will make up the losses. The multinational loan agencies will then be free to loan more money to the defaulting countries. An additional 20 nations are reportedly in line to receive similar relief over the next two years, increasing the bailout to \$55 billion. Treasury Secretary John Snow calls it "an achievement of historic proportions." (*Human Events*, June 20, 2005).

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## HOSPITAL REMOVES BIBLE TO FIGHT GERMS

A Canadian hospital is being criticized for its decision to take Bibles out of its patients' rooms to stem the spread of germs. The Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital

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## Bible & The Newspaper

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in Fredericton, New Brunswick, said the Bibles---along with phone books and hospital directories---were removed to stop the spread of germs, according to the National Post of Canada. Mayor Brad Woodside of Fredericton said the hospital was trying to do away with Christian symbols. Hospital chaplain Karl Cszasz said a Bible is no greater threat to a hospital patient than other objects in the room. (*Western Recorder*, June 21, 2005).

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### POLL FINDS MORE PEOPLE CLAIM EVANGELICAL LABEL THAN HOLD BELIEFS

PRINCETON, N.J. (RNS)---Four in 10 Americans identify themselves as evangelical or born-again Christians, but a significantly smaller percentage of Americans actually subscribe to "core evangelical doctrine," the Gallup Organization has found.

In an April poll, 42 percent of respondents said they consider themselves to be born-again or evangelical.

But in a similar poll taken in early May, only 22 percent agreed with all three beliefs that Gallup said "most evangelical leaders would say are core evangelical doctrine."

The questions were about evangelism, the authority of the Bible and a turning point in one's life that related to Christian commitment.

The poll found:

\* 52 percent said they had encouraged someone to believe in Jesus Christ.

\* 32 percent said they believe the "Bible is the actual Word of God."

\* 48 percent said they "have been born again or had a born-again experience."

The percentage of Americans who say they have had a born-again experience increased the most over the last few decades. In 1976, just 35 percent said they had had such an experience.

The new polls, each of about 1,000 U.S. adults had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. (*Western Recorder*, June 21, 2005).

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### SUPREME COURT SUPPORTS PRISONERS' RELIGIOUS RIGHTS

A five-year-old federal statute focusing on the religious freedom of prisoners is constitutional, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled last week. The court unanimously held that the section of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) dealing with prisoners does not violate the First Amendment's Establishment Clause. The statute bars government from limiting the religious liberty of prisoners in federally funded institutions without a compelling reason. "RLUIPA...protects institutionalized persons who are unable freely to attend to their religious needs and are therefore dependent on the government's permission and accommodation for exercise of their religion," wrote Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg for the court. (*Western Recorder*, June 7, 2005).

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### SUPREME COURT TO RULE ON PARENTAL NOTICE FOR ABORTION

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to rule

on a state law requiring parental notification when an underage girl seeks an abortion. The high court announced it would review a lower court decision striking down New Hampshire's parental notification law. A three-judge panel of the First Circuit Court of Appeals, in Boston, ruled in November that the law is unconstitutional because it does not contain an exception to protect the health of the mother and its exception for a threat to her life is too narrow. (*Western Recorder*, June 7, 2005).

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### FIFTH STATE SENDING MARRIAGE AMENDMENT TO VOTERS

The Texas Senate passed a constitutional marriage amendment May 21, making it the fifth state this year to send such an amendment to voters. The amendment, which would ban both "gay marriage" and civil unions, will go to voters Nov. 8. Four other states---Alabama, South Carolina, South Dakota and Tennessee---will vote on marriage amendments next year. Eighteen states have passed marriage amendments, although Nebraska's was struck down in federal court. (*Western Recorder*, June 7, 2005).

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### JUDGE UPHOLDS STATE AMENDMENT DEFINING MARRIAGE

FRANKFORT---Kentucky's 2004 constitutional amendment upholding traditional marriage withstood its first legal challenge May 26.

The amendment, approved by Kentucky voters last November by a 3-to-1 margin, defines marriage as "between one man and one woman." It also specifies that "a legal status identical to or similar to marriage for unmarried individuals shall not be valid or recognized."

"The Kentucky electorate overwhelmingly wanted to protect marriage from any kind of redefinition," Ostrander noted, "and so they amended the Kentucky Constitution." (*With additional reporting by Baptist Press*) (*Western Recorder*, June 7, 2005).

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### U.S., CANADIAN ANGLICAN BISHOPS UNREPENTANT REGARDING HOMOSEXUALITY

(EP)—Anglican bishops from the United States and Canada gathered in England on June 21 to explain their stance on homosexuality, but their explanation amounted to a defense of their decision to elevate an openly homosexual priest to the rank of bishop.

Rather than apologize or show any sign of contrition for the divisions the elevation of Gene Robinson has caused, the North American bishops said, "We believe that God has been opening our eyes to acts of God that we had not known how to see before." In a prepared statement to the Anglican Consultative Council, the American and Canadian bishops affirmed "the eligibility for ordination of those in covenanted same-sex unions."

This meeting came as a result of events that began in February, when leaders of the 38 national Anglican churches chastised the U.S. Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada, asking them not to attend this week's meeting of the Consultative Council, an international body of bishops,

priests and lay people that meet every three years.

Rather, they were instructed to send representatives to explain the theological reasoning behind the consecration of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire, and the decision by the western Canadian diocese of New Westminster to authorize the blessing of same-sex unions.

Official church policy declares homosexual sex "incompatible with scripture."

"...Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations" (Ez. 14:6).

"Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin" (Ez. 18:30).

"...Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

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### PBA RULING UNDERSCORES IMPORTANCE OF SUPREME COURT BALANCE

(EP) — A federal appeals court has upheld a ruling that the federal Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act is unconstitutional. The July 8 decision by the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis underscores the important role that will be played by whomever is chosen to replace retiring Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

"Five years ago, five justices of the Supreme Court, including Justice O'Connor, ruled that *Roe v. Wade* allows an abortionist to perform a partial-birth abortion any time he sees a 'health' benefit, even if the woman and her unborn baby are entirely healthy. (Stenberg v. Carhart, 2000) Today's appeals court ruling (in *Carhart v. Gonzales*) was based entirely on the prior 5-4 Supreme Court decision, and it underscores the fact that the successor to Justice O'Connor will cast the deciding vote on whether the brutal partial-birth abortion method remains legal," National Right to Life Committee Legislative Director Douglas Johnson said in a press release.

Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council said the appeals court, in upholding the Nebraska district court decision, gives its stamp of approval to "late-term abortion procedures where an intact child is brutally killed before fully exiting the womb on the basis of an ambiguous definition of the word 'health.'"

"This decision ignores countless medical studies showing that partial-birth abortion (PBA) is never medically necessary under an accurate definition of 'health,'" he added.

President Bush signed the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act in 2003, but a ruling issued in New York just nine months later said the ban conflicted with the Supreme Court's 2000 ruling on *Roe v. Wade*. Even so, Judge Richard C. Casey admitted that the procedure is "gruesome, brutal, barbaric and uncivilized."

His ruling is under review by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit while another challenge to the law is on the agenda for the Ninth Circuit Appeals Court. Rulings in these courts would set the stage for a possible review by the Supreme Court during its 2005-2006 term.

"With the Nebraska PBA case now sure to reach the Supreme Court, it is more important than ever that President Bush stick to his campaign promise of appointing judges who will strictly interpret the constitution,"

Perkins said.

"...Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?" (Ps. 58:1).

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### CANADIAN LAWMAKERS APPROVE BILL TO LEGALIZE SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

(EP)—Canadian lawmakers ignored the protests of conservative and religious leaders and approved a bill that would make Canada the third country in the world to legalize homosexual marriage.

The bill would grant same-sex couples legal rights equal to those in traditional marriages. The legislation was drafted by Prime Minister Paul Martin's Liberal Party government. It is expected to pass the Senate and become federal law by the end of July.

The Netherlands, Belgium, and Spain are the only other nations that have legalized gay marriage. Spain's Parliament legalized same-sex marriage on June 29, despite the protests of religious leaders who opposed making the majority Roman Catholic country a haven for gay marriage.

Some of Canada's liberal lawmakers voted against the bill, and a Cabinet minister resigned over the legislation. But enough allies rallied to support the measure that has been debated for months, voting 158 to 133 to approve it on June 27.

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### UNITED CHURCHES OF CHRIST GIVES STAMP OF APPROVAL TO SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

(EP)—With a July 4 vote, United Church of Christ leaders made theirs the largest Christian denomination to endorse same-sex marriage — a decision that may lead some congregations to leave the fold.

According to the Associated Press, an estimated 80 percent of the UCC's 884-member General Synod voted for the resolution pressing churches to adopt wedding policies "that do not discriminate against couples based on gender."

The denomination includes some 1.3 million members in more than 5,700 congregations, many of whom do believe in the sanctity of marriage and are saddened, if not mortified, by the resolution.

"If we had put it to a vote of the people in the pews, it would have failed overwhelmingly," the Rev. Brett Becker told reporters. Pastor of St. Paul United Church of Christ in Cibolo, Texas, he said his congregation may decide to leave the denomination over the issue.

"This is truly Independence Day for the UCC," Becker lamented. "We have declared ourselves independent from the teachings of Jesus and the clear teachings of Scripture."

Beyond being "open and affirming" of gays and lesbians, a step the UCC took some 20 years ago, the resolution specifies that bisexual and transgender persons merit the same support and protections as gays and lesbians. It also asks congregations to support legislation granting equal rights to same-sex marriage and to work against laws banning gay marriage.

"The mainline Protestant denominations in the United States continue to demonstrate how far some in their leadership have departed from the true 'main line' of orthodox Christian teaching and the views of the people in their own pews," said the Family Research Council's Tony Perkins.

♦ (Continued on page 159)

# Bible & The Newspaper

(Continued from page 158) ♦

## NEW 'RELIGIOUS LIBERTY' LAW IN CHINA DOES LITTLE TO PROTECT UNREGISTERED HOUSE CHURCHES

(EP)—Along the road to new freedom, Chinese house-church Christians in northeastern Jilin Province have collided with a communist regime that may still be talking in double-speak. Government officials proclaimed new freedom for China's religious believers in March, with an unprecedented law that granted rights to religious adherents—even underground house-church worshippers—if they conformed to certain registration requirements. But 600 Christians saw little of that new liberty when police rounded them up and ferried them to detention centers in May.

According to the Texas-based China Aid Association, the sweep against approximately 100 house churches began May 22, on a Sunday morning when authorities knew Christians would congregate for worship.

The raids continued over the next week, targeting homes in Jilin's provincial capital, Changchun. Officials released most of those arrested within two days after detaining and questioning them, but about 100 remain in custody—among them local university professors.

Christian influences are strong in Jilin, a province that borders North Korea, where a large group of Korean émigrés have churches. The professors were known to conduct secret Bible study groups, and several university students were also in the group taken into custody. What grabbed the authorities' attention, explained China Aid President Bob Fu, was their bold advertisement of faith. "These university students were actively engaging in evangelism, outreaching to the campus," he said. "They were found distributing gospel tracts."

The latest raid, Fu said, boils down to China's implementing the March 1 law, called the Provisions on Religious Affairs. "There's a national campaign to carry out this law," he said. The central government is coordinating with the Public Security Bureau and other agencies "to investigate and identify so-called unregistered and illegal religious groups. This is the first phase . . . we anticipate there will be more massive arrests in the months ahead."

Last year a May directive from the Communist Party instructed officials to actively spread Marxism and stamp out foreign "evil teachings"—a venomous term for religion. The order led to a wave of arrests between June and August 2004. One victim was Beijing pastor Cai Zhuohua, whom authorities arrested last September and still have not released.

Fu said officials postponed his trial twice, most recently slating it to begin at the end of June. In custody since Sept. 11, Cai has endured torture with an electric shock baton and deteriorating health. For 45 days, as the weather turned frigid inside his cell, authorities did not give him warm clothes.

China announced a new 48-article law last November, promising its enactment in March. The state's Xinhua news agency reported the law was six years in the making and said it would be "a significant step forward in the protection of Chinese citizens'

religious freedom." Instead, the law provides the government a smoother avenue for dictating how religion should be practiced, human-rights and legal experts say.

Some provisions appear to offer a glimmer of openness: The government now recognizes religious groups as social organizations, capable of providing needed social services once legalized. Before, officials viewed such groups as threats to society. Within a framework of legality, too, religious groups may publish their literature and hold cross-provincial meetings—another new "freedom." And, as long as religious groups, including previously secret house churches, register with the government, they will not be forced to join one of the five state-sanctioned patriotic religious associations.

But in the definition of legal lies the rub. In effect, the law augments the power of the State Administration for Religious Affairs, formerly known as the Religious Affairs Bureau. "They are the ones who arbitrarily define who is legal and illegal," Fu said.

Many underground groups fear to register in that climate and now are beginning to feel the heat for not registering. Among the 600 Jilin Christians taken into custody was 58-year-old Zhao Dianru, a leader of some 18 Changchun house churches. Authorities recently asked Mr. Zhao three times to join the state-sanctioned church, but he refused. About a dozen police and security officers raided his home. They confiscated 20 boxes of Christian books, according to China Aid, but released him on June 6.

Another house church in Shanxi Province faced a similar raid on May 13 during a theological training session for 30 of its leaders. Officials arrested the host pastor, Zhang Guangmin, and released him after 15 days but kept another elder until mid-June. Both leaders refused to join the government's Three-Self Patriotic Movement, the official Protestant church.

"Already the Department of National Security and these agencies have started meetings negotiating with house-church groups, encouraging them to register," Fu said. The officials invite Christians for quiet chats over coffee and offer assurances, such as, "We want to make sure there's no illegal activity—we want to protect you. Be careful of what you write and what you say." But now, groups who refuse the "protection" of the March law stand to be prosecuted under it.

What remains unknown is how China will apply the law across different locales. Prohibitions against unregistered churches have always been enforced region by region, with some provinces enjoying greater freedom than others. In all, an estimated 30 million Protestants and 5 million Catholics are believed members of unofficial house churches.

"The regulations seem to imply much less space for house churches," said Mickey Spiegel, a senior researcher on Asia at Human Rights Watch. Still, they are "very, very loose. They're almost impossible to interpret."

But has a fresh crackdown begun this year? Spiegel said it is hard to identify a trend among scattered reports of raids and arrests. About the only certainty is that state repression has not eased—"not by any stretch of the imagination." For underground Christians, these early portents are troubling.

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## NATIONAL BRIEFS

(EP)—A new group that claims to be both Christian and liberal has formed to counter the influence of such groups as the Christian Coalition. The Christian Alliance for Progress announced its plans on June 22 in both Washington and Jacksonville, Fla. Founders of the group said it will promote equality for gays and lesbians, abortion rights, health care for all Americans, and peace over war.

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(EP)—The Tulsa Zoo in Oklahoma will add a display featuring the biblical account of creation. The Tulsa Park and Recreation Board voted 3-1 in early June to create a display explaining how the world began according to Genesis. A heated two-hour debate included some who said religion should not be part of the taxpayer-funded organization. Supporters of the exhibit said the zoo already had displays with religious themes, including the statue of the Hindu god, Ganesh, outside the elephant exhibit and a marble globe inscribed with the words, "The earth is our mother. The sky is our father."

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(EP)—Two Christian pastors in Australia who said Islam was an inherently violent religion may face jail time for refusing to apologize for their comments. A Victoria state tribunal ordered Danny Nalliah and Daniel Scot to apologize for comments they made in a speech, on a Web site and in a church newsletter in March 2002. Their convictions were the first under the state's anti-vilification laws, passed in 2002. "Right from the inception, we have said that this law is a foul law, this law is not a law which brings unity," Nalliah told reporters. The two pastors have appealed their convictions to Victoria's Supreme Court.

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(EP)—A recent study by the Heritage Foundation on the effectiveness of abstinence pledges in curbing sexual activity among students seems to confirm that the pledges work. The study shows that students who take such pledges decrease their likelihood of contracting a sexually transmitted disease and are less prone to engage in any form of sexual activity. Focus on the Family's Linda Klepacki said, "This study is a great confirmation of something that supporters of abstinence education have known for some time. Abstinence pledges, which we know are almost always promoted by churches and other faith-based groups, can and do make a real difference." The study findings, Klepacki says, should encourage the Christian community to "continue and even increase" their efforts at promoting abstinence.

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(EP)—North Carolina judges will consider if courtroom witnesses can be sworn in on the Quran instead of the Bible. Judges in Guilford County, N.C., recently rejected the Greensboro Islamic Center's offer to donate copies of the Quran for courtroom use. In a preliminary opinion, one state attorney said swearing on the Quran is permissible. But the Guilford County judges maintain that "an oath on the Quran is not a lawful oath under our law." Arsalan Iftikhar, legal director for the Washington, D.C.-based Council on American-Islamic Relations, said Muslims shouldn't have to swear on a text

they don't consider sacred. "Eliminating the opportunity to swear an oath on one's own holy text may also have the effect of diminishing the credibility of that person's testimony," he said.

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(EP)—The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has filed suit to shut off federal funding for the Silver Ring Thing (SRT), a group that encourages students to pledge abstinence until marriage. The ACLU claims it's unconstitutional to fund any program with a faith-based component.

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(EP)—The national convention of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) ended on June 27 in Columbus, Ohio, but not

♦ (Continued on page 160)

### BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 5-1-2005 to 5-31-2005

Beginning Balance.....	\$482.95
RECEIPTS:	
Arthur D. Richardson, Cedarville, WV .....	100.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL .....	57.36
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	1,100.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL .....	60.00
Berea M. B. C., Mansfield, OH .....	50.00
Berea M. B. C., Westpoint, TN .....	150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX .....	100.00
Bible Believer's B. C., Naples, ID .....	150.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV .....	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	250.00
Cedar Grove B. C., Millport, AL .....	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL .....	25.00
Community B.C., San Marcos, TX .....	40.00
Eve Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....	200.00
Faith M. B. C., Clarksville, TN .....	100.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR .....	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK .....	70.00
Hillcrest B. C., Winston-Salem, NC .....	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV .....	100.00
J. L. Sadler, Alford, FL .....	72.00
Joseph Jurzec, Richmond, IL .....	50.00
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC .....	25.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM .....	200.00
Leston Farrell, Des Allemands, LA .....	125.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM .....	300.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH .....	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN .....	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN .....	50.00
New Testament B. C., Leivasy, WV .....	100.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA .....	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....	100.00
South Park M. B. C., Seattle, WA .....	50.00
Southside B.C., Fulton, MS .....	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS .....	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Galena, OH .....	150.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL .....	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX .....	30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC .....	100.00
Timothy Hille, Ashland, IL .....	9.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....	25.00
Subscriptions .....	409.00
Anon .....	360.00
Dividing checks .....	155.00
Sub Total .....	\$5,807.36
TOTAL .....	\$6,290.31
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing .....	610.68
Postage .....	1,042.15
Supplies .....	232.95
Wages .....	3,920.00
FICA .....	281.47
Total Expenditures .....	6,087.25
.....	203.06
Bank Charges .....	-19.05
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$184.01

### BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 6-1-2005 to 6-30-2005

Beginning Balance.....	\$2,881.76
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	225.00
Berea B. C., Westpoint, TN .....	50.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	125.00
Calvary I. B. C., Everson, WA .....	300.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	100.00
Dividing check .....	125.00
.....	925.00
TOTAL .....	3,806.76
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time .....	200.00
Postage .....	25.95
Dividing check .....	125.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....	350.95
.....	\$3,455.81
Interest .....	+50
.....	3,456.31
Less Corbin, KY fund balance .....	891.52
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$2,564.79

### CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance.....	\$891.52
EXPENDITURES:	
.....	0.00
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$891.52

## Bible & The Newspaper

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without controversy. The organization barred from its convention an ex-gay group while allowing a pro-homosexual group to conduct a workshop. The group barred Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX) from addressing the convention, holding a workshop, or displaying material. But the PTA hosted a workshop by Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), which urged the establishment of homosexual-affirming diversity training in public schools. Dr. Warren Throckmorton, a professor at Grove City College and an outspoken critic of PFLAG and other pro-homosexual groups, said he's not surprised by the decisions. He said the PTA has become increasingly pro-homosexual over many years.

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(EP)--The National Education Association (NEA) has adopted a new strategy to counter opposition to the formation of Gay-Straight Alliance clubs in public schools, and has condemned opponents of those clubs. At its recent convention in Los Angeles, representatives of the 2.7-million-member NEA voted overwhelmingly to develop a comprehensive strategy to deal with "the new and more sophisticated attacks" against policies that create a safe environment for "gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender" (GLBT) students in schools. The Washington Times quotes the chairman of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Caucus of the NEA, who asserted that "extremist groups are using increasingly sophisticated and aggressive tactics to attack school districts with affirming GLBT policies, curriculum, and practices."

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(EP)--Elementary-age children who watch TV in their bedrooms score significantly lower in several disciplines, according to a new study.

The survey, published in the July edition of the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, looked at third-graders in California and found that those with television sets in their bedrooms scored on average 7 points lower on math, reading and language arts tests. It also found that children who watch more than three hours of TV a day are less likely to finish high school or graduate from college.

By contrast, researchers found that children who don't have a TV in their bedrooms but do have access to a computer at home score about 6 points higher on reading tests.

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**WASHINGTON-** A sharply divided U. S. Supreme Court barred Ten Commandments displays in courthouses June 27.

The 5-4 decision found that Commandments displays in two Kentucky courthouses violate the separation of church and state by promoting religion.

The Commandments displays in two Kentucky courthouses went too far in endorsing religion, the court ruled.

Dissenting from the majority Justice Antonin Scalia wrote: "The Commandments have a proper place in our civil history," adding the rule of law includes "absolutely

indispensable requirement that judicial opinions be grounded in consistently applied principle" (*Western Recorder*, June 28, 2005).

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(EP)--Continued controversy over whether the Ten Commandments can be displayed on government property hasn't kept many Christians from putting their beliefs on display, everywhere from roadside marquees to T-shirts and bumper stickers. In fact, some say the displays are becoming more common since the Ten Commandment cases emerged. A retired judge-executive in southeastern Kentucky put a placard of the Ten Commandments on his lawn, as did most of his neighbors, after a judge first ruled that the display in the McCreary County courthouse had to come down. "You should have seen it," Jimmie Greene told the Associated Press. "The landscape was covered with Ten Commandments." "People want to do something to reflect their principles, and that's one way they can legally do it," said Don Swarthout, head of the Kentucky-based Christians Reviving America's Values.

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(EP)--In November 2004, 57 percent of Oregon voters decided that traditional marriage was important enough to protect it in their constitution. Now some state lawmakers want to undermine the will of the people and force same-sex marriage onto Oregonians. SB 1000 has already passed in the Senate, and if it is approved by the House, it would give homosexual couples the same legal status and benefits of married couples. The bill also adds sexual orientation to the state's discrimination laws, placing sexual orientation alongside race and religion.

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(EP)--A New Jersey appeals court on June 14 said the New Jersey constitution does not give homosexuals the right to marry.

The traditional definition of marriage was challenged in a lawsuit filed against the state by seven homosexual couples. The 14 plaintiffs had claimed the state of New Jersey had violated their fundamental right to marry when they were refused marriage licenses and had denied them equal protection under the law. The opinion said that the right to marry "has always been understood in law and tradition to apply only to couples of different genders."

The ruling was not only a victory for traditional marriage, but also seemed to support a "constructionist" view of the constitution, a view that most conservatives affirm. The ruling said in part: "The personal views of the members of the court concerning

'the wisdom or policy of a statute' should play no part in determining its constitutionality. A constitution is not simply an empty receptacle into which judges may pour their own conceptions of evolving social mores. Consequently, our personal views of the legislative decision to limit the institution of marriage to members of the opposite sex are irrelevant."

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(EP)--Most women in Eugene, Ore.--or any city, for that matter--have no interest in sharing public restrooms with men. But if the city council approves a new ordinance backed by the local Human Rights Commission (HRC), the women of Eugene will be asked to do just that.

The city's current Human Rights Ordinance bars discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, ethnicity, marital status, familial status, age, sexual orientation, or source of income. The new ordinance would add "gender identity" to that list of personal traits--a provision that would allow bathroom choice based on psychological self-appraisal: Do I feel like a man or a woman?

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(EP)--The AFL-CIO, the nation's largest federation of workers' unions, is lobbying against the Marriage Protection Amendment (MPA), legislation that would constitutionally define marriage as between one man and one woman.

The organization represents 58 national and international labor unions and more than 13 million workers, but some say its policies are liberal compared to the people it represents.

(EP)--A Laurel County, Ken., judge offers some drug and alcohol offenders the option of going to church instead of jail or rehab. District Judge Michael Caperton, said he thinks church attendance could help some young offenders. The American Civil Liberties Union has objected to the practice, but Caperton, a district judge since 1994, has offered the option about 50 times to repeat drug and alcohol offenders in Laurel and Knox counties since earlier this spring. He has limited it to defendants with misdemeanor public intoxication or drug-possession charges. The results are not yet in, since the first offenders to get the option won't be back in court for a follow-up until July. But if the program works, it could save a lot of money, which could be a significant incentive for minor offenders. A 30-day treatment program can cost offending clients

up to \$2,800.

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(EP)--The United States has reached an AIDS milestone, but not one to be celebrated. Federal health officials announced June 13 that there are 1-million people living with HIV/AIDS in the United States. The only good news in the study is the finding that rates of new infection have remained constant, and the increase in the number of cases is due to the fact that persons with AIDS are living longer. African-Americans account for about 47 percent of AIDS cases. Homosexual and bisexual men make up 45 percent of those living with HIV.

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### WORLD BRIEFS

(EP)--Between a half-million and a million-and-a-half people gathered in Madrid on June 18 to protest the legalization of homosexual marriage. The protesters were led by 20 Roman Catholic bishops who oppose a gay marriage bill that has already passed the lower house of Spain's Parliament. Adoption by homosexuals will also become legal if the bill passes the Senate. Opinion polls indicate a majority of Spaniards support the bill, but this demonstration was among the largest displays of church activism in more than 20 years.

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(EP)--The United States gives more aid to developing countries than any other nation. In a recent study by the Hudson Institute, the U.S. gave 15 times more than its European neighbors. Church collections, philanthropists and company giving amounted to \$22 billion. That is compared to a European Union average of \$1.6 billion in private-sector giving. The study also noted that 12 percent of the immigrant population sends more than \$40 billion in aid to their home countries. President Bush has pledged to take African aid from \$1.2 billion to \$8.7 billion by 2010.

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(EP)--Leaders of the Church of England voted July 11 in York to start the legislative process that would open the office of bishop to female priests. Forty-one bishops in the church's governing General Synod voted to begin the process of removing the legal obstacles barring female bishops and six voted against it; 167 clergymen and women voted yes, and 46 voted against. The issue must now be debated and later brought back to the synod for further voting. Bishop of Southwark Tom Butler authored the motion, telling the 500 delegates that women already played key roles in the Anglican church. Currently, only men can hold the post. The 77-million strong worldwide Anglican Communion has its roots in the Church of England. Anglican churches in New Zealand, Canada and the United States have women bishops. In addition, 11 other national churches have authorized women bishops.

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