

# The Berea Baptist Banner

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

## God's Plan Is Better

By Doug Newell IV of  
Clendenin, West Virginia

**"...the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places"** (Phil. 1:12-13).

Life can change in a hurry. Rarely does life go like we wanted. I know my life is nothing like I thought it would turn out. Husbands and wives have plans and circumstances suddenly and



unexpectedly change the whole direction of their life forever. What are we to do? How are we to respond? The right answer is to rejoice. Rejoice, if you are in the Lord Jesus Christ, saved and forgiven, because God's plan is better than your plan. It might not be what you wanted, and it might not be the easiest, but know it is better in God's plan. **"...all things**

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## The Johanne Comma of I John 5:7-8

By Matthew Stepp  
of Wayne, West Virginia

I John 5: (7) **"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. (8) And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one"** (King James Version (KJV) - 1611).

I John 5: (7) "And it is the Spirit that beareth wit-ness, because



the Spirit is the truth. (8) For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in

one."

(American Standard Version (ASV) - 1901).

I John 5: (7) "For there are three

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## Walk in the Light of Your Fire

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia

**"Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This**



**shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow"** (Isa. 50:10-11).

Our text passage is an interesting one.

My sermon title comes from the second verse, "Walk in the Light of Your Fire." I want you to know from the beginning of this sermon, that this phrase is not a positive

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## Genesis 3:19

By Roy Mason  
(1894 - 1978)

For my text, I go back to the first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis, the third chapter and verse 19, **"...dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."** These words spoken unto Adam following his fall into sin, and they designate the nature of man's body and his ultimate earthly end. **"...dust thou art."** Were those words spoken back there in the early history of the human race actually scientifically true? They certainly were, for by actual scientific tests and investigation, it has been determined that the same chemical elements that compose the ground upon which we walk, compose the body of a



man. We eat the products of the soil, we are made up of what we eat. Our bodies grow and develop from the

dust of the earth, and when death lays its hand upon us, we go back to dust. **"...dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."** It is both humbling and inspiring to consider man's origin and end, depending upon the viewpoint from which we consider these, of course. It is quite well for us to go back sometimes to the beginning of things, for in this way, we are able to form a more accurate estimate of the real value

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1. To honor God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To preach the gospel to lost sinners.
3. To spread the whole counsel of God's Word.
4. To encourage God's preachers and to strength-en His churches in the most holy faith.
5. To motivate God's children to a closer fellow-ship 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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## Johannine Comma

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that testify: (8) the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree." (English Standard Version (ESV) - 2001).

Hold on here, now! This passage in First John is getting shorter. The newer the "bible?" the shorter. What is going on? Well, verse seven is gone in the modern versions, is what the problem is. Sneakily, they have kept the number seven, by breaking the first part of verse eight off into the pseudo verse seven. Which version is correct? Selah! Think about it!

Well, since we do not have the original manuscript (MS) that John the beloved Apostle wrote, just copies made in each generation since, there were bound to be errors, as humans laboriously had to write each word on papyrus and parchments. The Jewish Old Testament scribes were awesomely careful and the Hebrew Masoretic Text is singularly unchallenged as to accuracy, validated by the recovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1946 of up to 2300-year-old manuscripts-essentially unchanged. The Byzantine Greek Texts have much the same unchanged history up to the Reformation, in what is called the Textus Receptus (TR). But critical textualism in modern times has brought many corrupted texts (manuscripts- MSS) found in various places and times, that have "variations" from the true line of preserved texts.

Many of these "corrupted" manuscripts do not contain the full text of I John 5:7-8 that one can read in the King James Version of the English Bible, originally translated in 1611 from the Textus Receptus (TR). But rather have basically put a "comma," where

verse seven should be shouting out the Holy Trinity; without a doubt the clearest verse in the Bible in reference to the matchless deity of God, the Father, God, the Son and God, the Holy Spirit. Early church fathers fought many heresies concerning the trinity of God (Gnosticism, Arianism, and Sabellianism), and early minions of confusion evidently started leaving this precious verse out of their copies.

I was listening to an internet preacher, who, as he was preaching through the first Epistle of John, came to what has become a highly controversial fifth chapter. He prefaced his remarks, as that he had done his "homework" and advised against listening to any "internet scholars" that might refute his sermon thesis. He then began to inform his congregation that the King James Bible that most were using, (obviously this was not his first attempt to get them to switch) was inferior to more "modern" translations, and that some "unknown" scribe somewhere down the line had added (or in this case subtracted?) his own "two cents" to God's Holy Word, that they thought they were holding in their hands. After reading what he claimed was a "conflated" text out of the King James, he read the diluted and scalped version of the NASB (New American Standard Bible) in contrast.

Well, I beg to differ, beloved reader! As this preacher spent the rest of his sermon erecting straw men and skewering them, quoting carefully "gauged" facts and attacking any "fools" that ONLY used the King James Version of the English Bible, I figured someone had better write an article, before they tried to bring that hypocrisy into one of our churches! "Now

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# Johannine Comma

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**the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron**" (I Tim. 4:1-2).

Now, the honest truth is that much research has been done on the subject of these two verses over the last hundred fifty years, so many compelling articles and books have been posted for BOTH sides of the argument, about whether or not the complete text of the Textus Receptus and the King James Version were in the original manuscript written by the beloved Apostle John through the power of the Holy Spirit. Anyone nowadays can cobble together a sermon or article to "slam dunk" for their viewpoint. I could do that! Just put together a sermon or article that just has references to "my side," and my congregation would be just as ignorant of the controversy as the ones that were listening to the preacher mentioned at the beginning of this article.

But to IGNORE validated facts, statements and quotes from the other side is not just "unscholarly," it is downright foolish, since anyone with a computer and an online connection can easily find out they had been bushwhacked. If one of those congregants decided to study further, they would see how much more there is to the subject, than "straw men" and blind faith in the speaker. How does that help the cause of truth (unless truth is not really what they are after)? Beloved reader, let us just deal with the facts, and certainly the truth will emerge, unscathed. Amen? Amen! **"Now**

**we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us...Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first"** (II Thess. 2:1-3).

The preacher I was listening to, evidently had read Bruce Metzger's book, or excerpts of *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. He basically ran down Metzger's presentation, so I will pretty much do the same, so that the beloved reader will have BOTH sides of the controversy and can pray for the Holy Spirit to lead them to the truth, which I believe is pretty obvious, particularly for someone without a "dog in the fight," as it were.

## VAST MAJORITY OF GREEK TEXTS DO NOT HAVE THE COMMA

Metzger first makes the claim that the Johannine Comma "is absent from every known Greek manuscript except eight...the eight manuscripts are as follows..." But as he lists the manuscripts, he only lists seven: 61, 88, 221, 429, 636, 918, 2318. Actually, as more and more manuscripts are found, there are more and more "commas" being found. A more recent source said eleven predate Erasmus.

The majority of mid-to-modern Greek texts do not have the full text of the passage, like the KJV does. But the majority is not such a super-majority as Metzger and "some preachers" make it out to be. The statement is often made that there are only eight to eleven manuscripts that contain the comma out of 5000 total Greek manuscripts. Such a statement implies that there are around

4990 manuscripts that deny the comma. That is not so, for less than 525 even contain this fifth chapter of I John. Of these only 498 are hostile to the comma. This is substantially less than that 5000 number thrown around. And further, if we are being honest and fair, only fourteen of those manuscripts predate the Ninth Century. The majority of those other 484 are obviously copies of those earlier fourteen. Does not really mean much more than a hill of beans, when one can credulously compare eleven comma manuscripts with fourteen non-comma manuscripts, does it?

At any rate, one manuscript that Metzger certainly knew about was the Codex Britannicus, which has the comma. That he makes this omission is inexcusable, since it is involved in the Erasmus Greek New Testament text that is integral to the King James Bible inclusion of the full, original text. Let us digress for a paragraph or two, to consider the story of Desiderius Erasmus.

## THE ERASMUS GREEK TEXT STORY

**"This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth"** (Titus 1:13-14). Erasmus was a Dutch Roman Catholic, who was sympathetic to the Reformers protesting against Catholic abuses, but never became a Protestant, because he was determined to reform Catholicism from within, keeping allegiance to the Pope (and free will!), staying a "good Catholic" until his death. Becoming both a Latin and Greek scholar, it became his life's ambition to collate all of the available manuscripts together into a single "critical" text in each language,

that would be as close as possible to the original manuscripts. It is said that he found six Greek manuscripts and used them to make his first and second editions. Neither of these first two editions contained the Johannine Comma. The well-known anecdote says that Erasmus was criticized for omitting the comma from his first and second editions. Edward Lee reportedly charged him with being an Arian for omitting I John 5:7-8. Erasmus argued that none of the Greek manuscripts in his possession contained the reading and supposedly challenged his critics to produce a manuscript with the passage. Only then, would he include it in his edition. The story goes on that Codex Monfort is supposedly the manuscript that was hastily drawn up to meet Erasmus' demands; the ink was supposedly still wet when Erasmus received it, most critics will ad lib and Erasmus included the comma verses in the critical third edition, which became his most familiar and widely circulated edition.

However, a different story is told by Erasmus' own hand. The following is a translation of Erasmus' own testimony of the event, by Henk J. de Jonge: "Is it negligence and impiety, if I did not consult manuscripts which were simply not within my reach? I have at least assembled whatever I could assemble. Let Lee produce a Greek MS which contains what my edition does not contain and let him show that that manuscript was within my reach. Only then can he reproach me with negligence in sacred matters."

De Jonge further elucidates from his information that Erasmus never challenged Lee, or other critics for a "new" manuscript. In his letter to Michael Maynard, he writes: "Erasmus does not at

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all ask for a MS containing the Comma Johanneum. He (merely) denies Lee the right to call him negligent and impious if the latter does not prove that Erasmus neglected a manuscript to which he had access."

That Edward Lee and others did find a Greek Text with the Johannine Comma intact, is as they say, History! Critics will many times make Erasmus a fool, to mislead "internet scholars" into adding the comma to his third edition. The integrity and scholarly reputation of Erasmus rides on our interpretation of his actions, at this point. Did Erasmus knowingly use a faulty and improvised text? Who in this modern age can honestly say with surety? Who can destroy this scholar's reputation based upon a mere interpretation of a letter from Erasmus to Edward Lee?

Well, fortunately for Erasmus' reputation, it does not really ever even come down to that crucifixion. If truth be known, Erasmus' translation does not even fit with the "proposed" fake manuscript, believed by these "story-tellers" to be the Codex Monfortianus. The verbal arrangement, and use of Greek articles that Erasmus settled on, are not possible to get from Codex Monfortianus. They do however, align with the Codex Britannicus, which is much more likely to have been obtained by eventual English Archbishop Edward Lee and others.

Adam Clark dates this important codex to the Thirteenth Century and weighs in on the subject:

"As far as Codex Britannicus is concerned, it cannot be equated with the Monfort, because the respective

renderings of I John 5:7-8 are quite different. On the one hand, the Monfort omits the articles in verse seven (o, o, to) and transposes "agion pneuma." In verse 8, the articles (to, to, to), a conjunction (kai), and the last phrase (kai oi trei eiV to en eisin) are missing. Britannicus, on the other hand, includes the articles and the final phrase but omits the adjective "agion" in verse 8. Where did Erasmus acquire the last clause for his third edition? He surely did not get it from the Complutensian Polygot or Codex Monfort, but from Britannicus. This is why Monfortianus cannot possibly be the same with the Codex Britannicus."

## EARLY CHURCH FATHERS DO WEIGH IN ON THE SUBJECT

Metzger's next faulty claim concerning the Johannine Comma, is that "the passage is quoted by none of the Greek fathers." Most critics, including the internet preacher I heard, expand that ignorantly to "Early Church Fathers." Honestly, I do not know if any critic before Metzger ever made that blanket assertion, that "none of the fathers" quote it, but I have certainly heard a lot of "internet scholars" repeat and even enlarge on his bold statement to try to silence the opposition. Kind of like evolutionists and liberals that keep repeating their theories forcefully and hope that eventually everyone will believe them? **"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"** (I Cor. 10:11-12).

Well, it is time for more facts:

Gregory of Nazanzus (a Greek Church Father from the fourth century), although not directly quoting the passage, specifically alludes to the passage and objects to the grammatical structure if the comma is omitted. If the Greek Church Fathers knew nothing of the controversy and passage, then why do we find one preaching a sermon on why the comma is necessary?! Gregory writes:

"What about John then, when in his Catholic Epistle he says that there are Three that bear witness, the Spirit and the Water and the Blood? Do you think he is talking nonsense? First, because he has ventured to reckon under one numeral things which are not consubstantial, though you say this ought to be done only in the case of things which are consubstantial. For who would assert that these are consubstantial? Secondly, because he had not been consistent in the way he has happened upon his terms; for after using Three in the masculine gender he adds three words which are neuter, contrary to the definitions and laws which you and your grammarians have laid down. For what is the difference between putting a masculine Three first, and then adding One and One and One in the neuter, or after a masculine One and One and One to use the Three not in the masculine but in the neuter, which you yourself disclaim in the case of Deity?" In this brief excursus, Gregory objects to the use of a masculine plural participle with three neuter nouns ( [7] m:pl = [8] n+n+n ) which, of course, is the case if the comma is omitted. In the assessment of

Michael Maynard: "Gregory of Nazianzus objected to the omission of I John v.7f."

But we can go earlier than Gregory. Tertullian also had read the Johannine Comma (long before Erasmus!) back as early as 180AD. In his book, *Against Praxeas*, II Tertullian writes: "... which distributes the Unity into a Trinity, placing in their order the three Persons--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: three however, not in condition, but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in aspect; yet of one substance, and of one condition, and of one power, inasmuch as He is one God, from whom these degrees and forms and aspects are reckoned, under the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

A powerful direct quote is found in the writings of Cyprian, the third century martyr for the faith. Around A.D. 250, Cyprian, as noted, wrote of John's Gospel and First Epistle, "The Lord says, 'I and the Father are one,' and again it is written of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, 'And these three are one.'" Cyprian is quoting both John 10:30 and I John 5:7 in his notations.

As we stated at the beginning of our article, there is sufficient evidence on both sides to make an argument for or against the Johannine Comma. As we evaluate the evidence, the conclusion we make is going to be based upon our convictions, in the end. If you are looking at a fossil, and you are a Darwin man, then you will draw different conclusions than I will, as a creation man. But the thing is, if a fossil is ever found that shows a link between fish and mammals, apes and men, then the law of like produces like will be destroyed, would it not? To me,

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# Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of  
Plant City, Florida



## SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON - BIBLE SURVEY #4 OLD TESTAMENT

TEXT: I Timothy 3:16

DEVOTIONAL READING: Genesis 3:15; Exodus 12:13; Psalm 40:7; Isaiah 40:5, 42:1

SUGGESTED HYMN: *Books of the Old Testament*

AIM: An Over-View of the Old Testament

INTRODUCTION—In this lesson, we are going to look at the Old Testament. We take the name for the first 39 books of the Bible from II Corinthians 3:14, **“But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.”**

What is meant by “Old Testament?” The word “testament” is defined as being the revelation or the will of an individual. So the Old Testament is the will of God revealed unto mankind. The word “testament” is also defined as a “covenant, agreement.” It is God’s agreement on how He is going to deal with mankind. We call it “old” because it has been done away with because of what the Son of God, Jesus Christ did at Calvary.

IMPORTANCE: Last week you were taught that the Bible is what? A Sword, A Lamp, A Light, A Hammer, Water. If you do NOT know how to use a sword, a hammer—then the tool is useless to you. If you use a sword, a hammer, a lamp incorrectly—you can injure yourself very seriously, or someone else. We must become skilful in using God’s Word (Hebrews 5:13).

FIVE MAJOR DIVISIONS: We are going to divide the Old Testament into five major divisions.<sup>1</sup> The reason that we do this is to help us study God’s Word. Please explain to the students that God’s Word is NOT written in chronological order.

1. PENTATEUCH: [pronounced: “pen-ta-too”] These are the first five books of the Bible. Often: the Law, the Law of Moses. In the New Testament, when “the writings of Moses” are referred to, it is these five books. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. In Pentateuch, the calling out of a people for God’s name sake is the predominant theme.<sup>2</sup> Genesis 12:1-7 is the origin of Israel. From that point on, God is dealing with a nation. The Pentateuch contains the origin of Israel, the deliverance of Israel, the setting up of her religious and civil laws; and God teaching that nation to depend on Him.
2. HISTORICAL BOOKS: These books contain the history of the people of God—the nation of Israel. The books are: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I & II Samuel, I & II Kings, I & II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther. In the historical books are contained the entering in of the Promised Land that God gave to Abraham and his seed. The period of the Judges and Kings, and the post-captivity period.<sup>3</sup>
3. POETICAL BOOKS: These books are often referred to as “wisdom.” The books in this division are Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes,

Song of Solomon (or Canticles). We call them “poetical” because they were written in the form of poetry (not rhyme). Job is most likely the oldest book of the Bible. Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon were written and mostly recorded during the time of the kings (David, Solomon). It should be noted that in Psalms every human emotion is contained.

4. MAJOR PROPHETS: The books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel comprise this section. We call these “major” because they are the larger books.
5. MINOR PROPHETS: The books are: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The Prophets were men that God raised up to declare His Word and will to the nation of Israel. The prophets prophesied (preached) when Israel was in spiritual decline. When Israel did not do what God told them to do, He raised up a prophet. Sadly, Israel did not listen to God or His prophets (II Chronicles 36:15-21). Two of the prophets did not prophesy concerning Israel: Jonah and Nahum. God sent them to the nation of Babylon.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: Remember, the theme of the Scriptures is the Lord Jesus. These divisions of the Scriptures help us to study God’s Word. In the Old Testament we see that God prepared a people to bring forth the Lord Jesus to be the Savior of men, women, boys, and girls. The Old Testament reveals many principles for the people of God. Let us search the Scriptures.

### NOTES

1. The teacher & student need to realize that these divisions are not “Divinely appointed” and that the Bible may be grouped in other ways.
2. Each individual book has its own theme, but predominantly this is the theme of these 5 books
3. Because Israel disobeyed God, He had another nation imprison them in different countries. After a time in captivity or “jail” God, enabled His people to return to the land He gave them. This is Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.

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

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unless you have got a dog in the fight and want to believe that it is okay to use the ESV or NIV, this quote from Cyprian destroys the idea that the comma was added at a late date. Cyprian, less than two hundred years after the writing of First John, is expressly quoting the Johannine Comma. The multitude of manuscripts that leave it out, are simply multiplied copies of the one original fake. It does not matter how many times you tell a lie, it will never become the truth, no matter how much

Arians and the Devil want it to. Selah! Think about it!

John Gill, in his *An Exposition on the Old and New Testament*, pages 907-908, comes down definitively in trusting in the Johannine Comma being fully Scriptural, as he writes:

“...and yet, after all, certain it is, that it (the 7<sup>th</sup> verse of 1 Jn. 5) is cited by many of them; by Fulgentius, in the beginning of the “sixth” century, against the Arians, without any scruple or hesitation; and Jerome, as before observed, has it in his translation made in the latter

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end of the “fourth” century; and it is cited by Athanasius about the year 350; and before him by Cyprian, in the middle, of the “third” century, about the year 250; and is referred to by Tertullian about, the year 200; and which was within a “hundred” years, or little more, of the writing of the epistle; which may be enough to satisfy anyone of the genuineness of this passage; and besides, there never was any dispute about it till Erasmus left it out in the first edition of his translation of the New Testament; and yet he himself, upon the credit of the old British copy before mentioned, put it into another edition of his translation. – Gill.”

Ken Matto also lists the following evidences of the Johannine Comma:

- 1) Tertullian who died in 220 A.D.
- 2) Cyprian of Carthage who died in 258 A.D.
- 3) Priscillian who died in 358 A.D.
- 4) The Speculum - Fifth century
- 5) A creed called Esposito Fidei - Fifth or sixth century
- 6) Fulgentius in Contra Arianos – 527 A.D.
- 7) A Confession of Faith of Eugenius, Bishop of Carthage (484 A.D.)
- 8) Cassiodorus of Italy (480-570 A.D.)
- 9) John Calvin in his Institutes of the Christian Religion (mid 16th Century) in Book 3, Chapter 1, section 1 mentions I John 5:7-8 without any doubt.
- 10) Some Syriac Peshitto manuscripts, The Syriac Edition at Hamburg, Bishop Uskan’s Armenian Bible, the Armenian

Edition of John Zohrob, the first printed Georgian Bible.

Again, if even a fraction of these are true, why would anyone desire to deny the legitimacy of the King James translators inclusion of the disputed text. It is old! It is valid! It is reasonable!

## IN DEFENSE OF THE TRIUNE NATURE OF GOD

One of the arguments used by modern critics, is that if this text is valid, it is demonstrably the most powerful text in the Bible on the Trinity of God. If that be the case, why was it not used more frequently in the struggles against Arianism, Sabellianism and Gnosticism in the past?

An argument from silence in many of these battles proves little, because much has been lost in the intervening years, but in at least one Council, we have proof that they did. Jesse Boyd, who writes evenhandedly on the subject, says thus:

“Nonetheless, Metzger completely ignores the fact that the verse was employed at the Council of Carthage in A.D. 415; by doing so, he would have us to believe that I John 5:7-8 was never used as proof of the Trinity and/or deity of Christ in the numerous debates that arose and plagued the Church concerning these issues. Prior to this council, a conflict had arisen between the Arians (led by King Huneric the Vandal) and a group of bishops from North Africa. An assembly was called at Carthage where I John 5:7-8 was insisted upon by Eugenius, the spokesman for the African bishops, as he confessed his faith and the faith of his brethren: “...and in order that we may teach until now, more clearly than light, that the Holy Spirit is now

one divinity with the Father and the Son. It is proved by the evangelist John, for he says, ‘there are three which bear testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.’” (Victor of Vitensis, *Historia persecutionis Africanae* Prov, 2.82 [3.11]; CSEL 7, 60. Translated by Michael Maynard in *A History of the Debate Over 1 John 5:7-8* (Tempe, AZ: Comma Publications, 1995), 43.)

But there are more. Additionally, Thomas Golda lists Aurelius Augustine in 398 A.D., using the full verse to defend Trinitarianism in *De Trinitate* against the heresy of Sabellianism; Vigilius Tapensis in *Three Witnesses from Heaven* in 485 A.D.; Victor Titensis in his *Historia Persecutionis* (vol.vii, p.60.); Cassiodorus in 500 A.D. (*Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina* by Migne, vol. 70, col. 1373.) and lastly 527 A.D., Fulgentius in *The Three Heavenly Witnesses* (*Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina* by Migne, vol. 65, col. 500.)

## OLD LATIN TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GREEK

The Latin trail, in many ways is very similar to the Greek-English transition. Metzger claims with his usual audacity that the Johannine Comma is not found in the earliest extant copies of the Vulgate, as issued by Jerome. While it is true that it does not appear in Codex Fuldensis (546 A.D.), one of the oldest Vulgate manuscripts, it must be remembered that Jerome died a little over a century before this copy was created. Evidently Jerome, himself, was aware of this conflict over the deity of Christ, and stated in his own lifetime that irresponsible transcribers had left out I John 5:7-8 in many of the

Greek codices. **“Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless”** (Prov. 23:10).

Really, this is a staggering piece of evidence that should not be left out of any exegesis on the subject. If they were cutting the comma out of the current Greek manuscripts, what would stop them from “correcting” the Latin Vulgate manuscripts in the years following Jerome’s death? If logic, rather than positional rationalization prevails, it is much easier to believe that Jerome’s original translation included the Johannine Comma, and the true copyists continued to include it down through the following centuries, as evidenced by well-known Vulgate manuscripts such as Ulmensis (ca. 850) and Toletanus (988). Even though “someone” had cut it out of the Codex Fuldensis, which happens to be the oldest surviving copy, F. A. Scrivener, himself admits that the passage “is found in the printed Latin Vulgate, and in perhaps 49 out of every 50 of its manuscripts.” Moreover, against Metzger’s claim of lateness, the comma is claimed by Maynard and others to be found in twenty-nine of the fairest, oldest, and most correct of extant Vulgate manuscripts.

Jesse Boyd continues this defense of the Latin preservation of the comma, with his studied perspective:

“The Old Latin translations of the New Testament are very important in establishing the authenticity of I John 5:7-8, for Latin was the major language up through the Middle Ages. The Old Latin is not the same as the Latin of Jerome’s Vulgate, which by the way, does include the Comma. The Old Latin predates the

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# Small Drops

By Joseph M. Sidders of  
Temperance, Michigan

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



## DEVASTATION OF SIN

Our home is surrounded by farmland owned and run by our neighbors. As a result, the ground is very fertile, and it causes for weeds and wild vines to grow very aggressively. Recently, as my family and I were pruning a small wooded portion of our property, we found ourselves beyond exhaustion as we had amassed a tremendous pile of vines, each well over 20 feet in length. These vines had started in the shade near the trunk, then they began their ascent toward sunlight by grasping hold of the lower hanging limbs. As they continued to climb, their grip choked the life from the bottom branches clear up to the summit where the vines spread laterally over the top limbs, thus killing the entire tree.

My son would tell you that a "good tree does its job:" providing shade. Whatever "job" these trees may have once had, they could no longer accomplish it; they were now dead and fruitless.

Many are familiar with the old writer's words "Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay." These little vines seem relatively harmless as weeds at ground level, but they have managed to kill trees that are well over 25 feet tall. This is how sin works in our lives as well. Initially, we justify starting the relationship with sin by calling it "harmless." Sin slyly grabs hold of the first tiny, inconsequential branch, quickly choking it out on its way to the

next branch called "habit." Steadily increasing in height and vigor, sin leaps to other branches like 'reckless abandon' and "who cares" until all that is left of our lively tree is devoured fruit and shame.

In order for believers to live the life they were redeemed for, they must consecrate their lives and live for the new purpose they have been called to. Paul wrote in II Corinthians 6:14-7:1, **"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."**

God, who created all things, was well aware of the danger of the thorny weeds in this life. He warns us to protect ourselves from

the dangers of sin through diligent prayer and Godly living. Are you striving to keep your tree free of vines by carefully identifying and pruning the things that seek to devour your fruit?

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



## Johannine Comma

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Vulgate text and is found well into the Middle Ages. Did the Old Latin consistently contain the Johannine Comma? For the answer to this question, one must turn to the Tepl Codex, a fourteenth century manuscript written in Middle High German. This Codex is significant because "the Tepl Codex actually predates a pre-Jerome text from a non-Vulgate MS, 'w.'"

"It comes as no surprise that the Tepl contains the Comma exactly as it is found in the Textus Receptus. As Maynard argues, its text "has a remarkable longevity into the 15th century. This indicates that German MSS (manuscripts) ought not to be dismissed as mere copies of Latin Vulgate MSS." According to Elliot, the Tepl comes from the Old Latin and has its affinity with "w" (an Old Latin manuscript from the 15th century). Latin manuscript "w" is dated to the 15th century while the Tepl is dated to the 14th. Had this been reversed, the German Tepl would be regarded with much less value. But, as it is, this Codex actually predates a pre-Jerome Latin text (w). The Tepl and the Old Latin manuscripts together "provide pre-Reformation support for

non-majority readings of the Authorized Version." (The Tepl not only contains I John 5:7-8 as it is found in the Textus Receptus, but Acts 8:37; 9:5-6; and 15:34, all of which are omitted in modern English versions.) [And These Three Are One - Jesse M Boyd, 22 April, 1999].

## WALDENSIAN TRANSLATIONS ARE INDEPENDENT VALIDATIONS OF THE JOHANNINE COMMA

More from Jesse Boyd:

"The Old Latin from which the Tepl descended is also found in the manuscripts of the Waldensians. History teaches that the Waldensians were those Christians who lived in the Vaudois valley in northern Italy. The Waldensian Church has been dated back to about A.D. 120. Their Old Itala Bible was translated in the early second century. The Waldensians were severely persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church between the fourth and thirteenth centuries. As Jack Moorman argues, "Research into the text and history of the Waldensian Bible has shown that it is a literal descendant of the Old Itala. In other words, the Itala has come down to us in Waldensian form, and firmly supports the Traditional Text."

"The translators of the AV 1611 King James Bible did not simply include the Comma because it was in Erasmus' edition of the Greek New Testament; they had four Bibles on their tables that had come under heavy Waldensian influence. All four contained the Johannine Comma as

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# Johannine Comma

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contained in the Textus Receptus. The first of these was the Geneva Bible which was translated in 1557 at Geneva, the center of the Swiss Reformation. The basis for the Geneva Bible was the French Olivetan which was translated by Olivetan, a Waldensian pastor and relative of John Calvin. This fact illustrates "how readily the two streams of descent of the Received Text, through the Greek East and the Waldensian West, ran together."

"Secondly, the AV translators utilized the Greek text of Theodore Beza, Calvin's successor at Geneva. With Calvin's help, Beza brought out a later edition of the Textus Receptus. Benjamin Wilkinson argues: 'This later edition of the Received Text is in reality a Greek New Testament brought out under Waldensian influence.' Unquestionably, the leaders of the Reformation -- German, French, and English--were convinced that the Received Text was the genuine New Testament, not only by its own irresistible history and internal evidence, but also because it matched with the Received Text which in Waldensian form came down from the days of the apostles.

"The third Bible influenced by the Waldensians and utilized by the AV translators was the Italian Diodati. Diodati, an Italian, succeeded Beza in the chair of Theology at Geneva and translated the received text into Italian. "This version was adopted by the Waldenses, although

there was in use at that time a Waldensian Bible in their own peculiar language."

"The fourth Bible of interest is the German Tepl which, as previously mentioned, was a translation of a pre-Jerome Latin text into German. "This Tepl manuscript represented a translation of the Waldensian Bible into the German which was spoken before the days of the Reformation." In addition to these four Bibles, there is reason to believe that the King James translators had access to at least six Waldensian Bibles written in the old Waldensian vernacular, all of which contained the disputed passage." (-Boyd- ibid)

The attack on the Johannine Comma is really a direct attack also on the scholarliness of the King James translators. The more I study about this incredible translation, the more I see the hand of God, bringing together such a collection of knowledge, intellect, and spiritual wisdom that could never be assembled today. Dr. John Overall was a particular scholar in the writings and doctrine of the Early Church Fathers. As the translators approached this admittedly difficult passage with relatively scanty texts, they leaned heavily upon Overall's knowledge of the writings and teachings where the Ancients had referenced those specific verses in their writings. Really, it came down to the point, where it was more logical that the comma existed, than to imagine all of these Early Church Fathers being mistaken. Actually, it seems to me that it is tenuous ground the modern critics stand on in rejecting the populous amount of other evidences, such as First Century church lectionaries.

Ken Motta defines these early

writings for us:

"Lectionaries were used in churches for readings and liturgy for church services especially for special days of the year. They are akin to the responsive readings which we find in today's hymn books. Tatian's Diatesseron was a harmony of the four gospels written about 150 A.D. When Taitian was (harmonizing) the book of John, he referenced I John 5:7, which proves that I John 5:7 antedates (the vaunted Codex) Vaticanus, by 200 years, where the verse is omitted."

Simply put, if the Johannine Comma did not exist in the originals, then how can so many varied quotes and allusions from the Early Church Fathers be found? Truly, if the comma was added to the Original Manuscripts, it was so early that no modern investigator would have any way of coming to a dogmatic conclusion.

So, what conclusion do we come to? Obviously Metzger and his colleagues have come to theirs. Without treating with so much ignored evidence, it easily comes across as the proverbial "slam dunk" from these "internet preachers." They just go on arrogantly defying anyone to question their "research," knowing smugly that very few will take the time to do so. Simply trot out the huge number of Greek manuscripts that have been corrupted a long time ago, spin a silly, unsubstantiated story about Erasmus giving in to Catholic peer pressure, point out that modern versions have a much more sophisticated and "doctored" following, and voila! we have our conclusion necessitated for us, by a simple majority. "Buy

the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding" (Prov. 23:23).

Well, we sovereign grace, landmark Baptists are used to being in the minority. **"And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines. But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory"** (II Sam. 23:11-12). The King James version is going to continue to be attacked as outdated and out-schooled. The Textus Receptus is going to continue to undergo onslaught and assault from the Devil and his minions, who love a superfluous and diversified "truth" that is constantly changing with the times. But that does not change God's truth, does it? If logic, reason and wisdom mean anything at all, there is every likelihood that the Johannine Comma was indeed originally penned by the beloved Apostle John. To that I add a faith in the preserving power of the Holy Spirit to guarantee His Words to every generation. **"Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come"** (Ps. 71:18). Martin Luther once said, "The Bible is like a lion; it does not need to be defended; just let it loose and it will defend itself..." Yeah, I think the Old Black Book is just fine the way it is. Selah! Think about it!

(Matthew Stepp is pastor of the Big Creek Baptist Church of Wayne, West Virginia.)





# God's Plan is

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**work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose**" (Rom. 8:28). All things, even those bringing us pain and suffering, work together for good.

Paul, the man who wrote these words, was not a self-help guru, living his best life. He was a prisoner, not knowing if he would ever be set free. Not many boys grow up dreaming to die a prisoner, but Paul looked at the spiritual reality of his life; **"...the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel"** (Phil 1:12). What a blessed way to look at a terrible situation. Rather than being despondent because he sat in bonds for preaching Christ, he realized his imprisonment meant the gospel would progress. The church worried his ministry would end, but his persecution had furthered the gospel. Paul desired to spread the gospel in Rome. God's plan? Lock Paul up. Now we can understand how the Philippians thought prison was not the best place for a missionary. It would have been easy for this to become a bitter providence, but God's plans are always better than ours.

According to secular history, Paul probably had a rent house for his confinement, continually chained to Roman soldiers. No privacy. No time alone for prayer and meditation. His unwanted circumstance provided unique ministry opportunities. While Paul taught Christians who visited him, he also had another captive audience listening in. How was Christ "manifest" in all the palace if Paul was locked up? The guards. Every shift, they had to listen to Paul pray, preach, teach

about Jesus. The guards could not leave and Paul could not stop preaching. They heard about Jesus all day long, and by God's grace, were converted. These guards filled with the Spirit, were able to carry the gospel places Paul would have never been able to go. Paul was not chained to the guard; the guards were chained to Paul.

Are you chained to a desk? A chair? A hospital bed? Be like Paul. God has you where you are so rejoice and serve Him where you are. You may have access to people no preacher ever will. Paul's imprisonment had some unintended consequences. God ordained the gospel to spread in ways no one would have considered. Not only were Paul's prison guards saved and spreading the gospel, but his confinement motivated others to get to work.

Paul's trail planted the seeds that grew a backbone in other men. **"And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much bolder to speak the word without fear"** (Phil. 1:14). Men had to step up with Paul locked up because now, someone had to do it. Great basketball players can sometimes make a team worse. Because of their great ability, average players continually defer to the star instead of being aggressive. Sometimes they stop to watch their MVP do great things. With Paul on the bench, these men could no longer stand aside and defer to the great apostle to spread the Word. Necessity is the great motivator. Few dad's work their dream job but labor in whatever job can provide for their family. Toss "personal fulfillment" out the window when you have hungry kids.

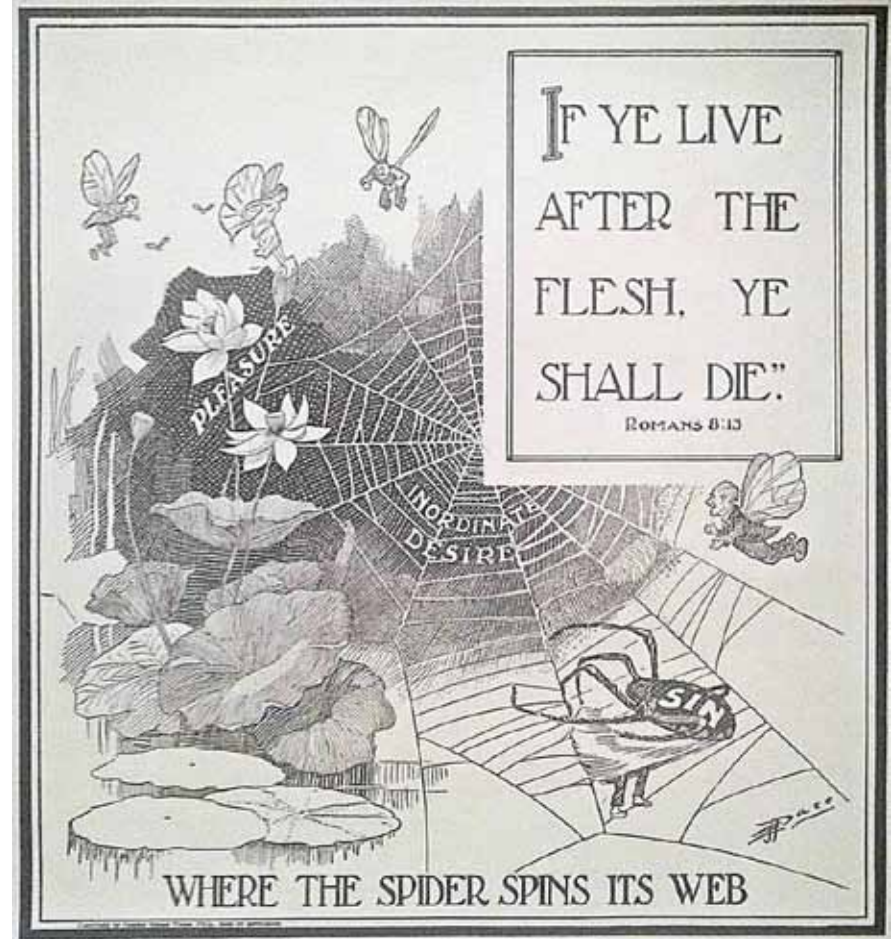
The dedication and commitment, that landed Paul in chains, stirred up these other

men to follow him with boldness. Perhaps they were shamed at their own walk or inspired by his. Sometimes it just takes one to stand. I have been in situations where a whole group of people wanted to do something, but everyone was afraid to speak. The whole group just sat there and stared at each other, waiting for someone else to do what they wanted to do but were afraid to start. Finally, when one stuck their neck out, and they all saw it did not get chopped off, others said "Yes, that is right, I agree!" It took one to stand. When Paul was thrown in jail, the men of other churches saw and said "Paul is right, and I will not fear what man can do to me!" Do not let the fear of man stop us from our duty. Paul's pain planted the seed of blessing for others.

**"Some indeed preach Christ**

**even of envy and strife..."** (Phil. 1:15). Paul's trial also stirred another group of Paul's fellow preachers. They indeed preached Christ and really preached the truth, but they were jealous and envious of Paul. They were jealous of Paul's position, resentful of Paul's preaching, and envious of Paul's authority. They competed against Paul on their way to "the top" which in reality, was a race to the back of the line (Matt. 20:16). This happens all the time. Power struggles in churches or between pastors of other churches of like faith, all trying to be the top dog. With Paul sidelined, now was the perfect opportunity to make a play to be the next big preacher. Out of strife and jealousy, they preached even more to move up in position. Remember, God knows your motives. Praise God

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# God's Plan is

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the gospel is preached, but what a shame to serve in the truth to make your own name great.

Let us be honest, shall we? There are some charlatans who pick up a Bible and preach. Some less than stellar individuals stand behind a pulpit every Sunday and preach the gospel for many reasons other than Christ's glory. However, as Paul said in Philippians 1:15, there are **"...some also of good will."** Some who preach because they love the Lord. Their desire is Christ exalted and His gospel proclaimed. Philippians 1:16-17 says, **"The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel."** Some men preached the truth out of spite, believe it or not, and only preached because Paul wanted to and could not and they wanted to rub it in his face. They wanted to tear Paul down to build themselves up. Others saw the standard bearer fall, and could not let the colors hit the ground, and picked up the flag and carried on the fight for the glory of their King. Some preach for fame. Some for fortune. But that does not mean everyone does. Just because you had a bad experience with one pastor or church does not mean all pastors and churches are wicked.

**"What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice"** (Phil. 1:18). Paul does not rejoice at the preaching of error. Paul did not put up with heresy for even an hour (Gal. 2:5). This verse does not address what they were saying, but why they said it. They preached a holy

message with wicked motives. Hypocrites who were thoroughly orthodox and really bad guys. Men who were right in doctrine but deceitful in heart. They were correct in theology but with wrong motives. Paul's main concern was not his own feelings but Christ's glory. If men preached the truth just to hurt him, or to get a big following, they could go right ahead. They can preach to get amens at his expense, if that floats their boat, as long as Christ the Lord is preached in truth.

I love the Baptist church. I try and pray never to compromise on Baptist distinctives. Anything worth believing is worth fighting for, and that includes church truth. However, I rejoice whenever people are saved, and Christ is preached.

The circumstance is not suited for Paul to rejoice, but he does because he rejoices in the Lord. Paul saw the big picture and what he wanted most was for sinners to trust in Jesus and His name proclaimed – and that was happening. Not the way he would have planned it or not the way he wanted it, but it was the way God planned it and God's ways are the best ways, every single time.

Are you going through a difficulty? Has God's providence proved to be a confusing disappointment? Have you considered God's ways are better than your ways? Have you applied gospel principles to your life?

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



## Genesis 3:19

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of the things of life. It is good for us as citizens to review the early days of our country, and to reread the history of our nation.

There are chapters that will arouse our patriotism, that will stir our emotions, and that will afresh a spirit of devotion to the institutions that are peculiar to this nation in which we live.

I got a great thrill out of my first visit to Richmond and Washington back many years ago, as I was reminded afresh of the early days of our republic. I walked through the home of Washington at Mount Vernon, and it was a day in spring and light rain had fallen, and everything was green and fresh, as I looked down on the lovely waters of the Potomac as it flowed there at the foot of the green slope of the lawn at Mount Vernon, and as I walked down the green hillside and stood and looked in at the tomb of Washington, and I remember that there was a bird singing in the top of one of the trees nearby. I thought of the struggle for independence at Bunker Hill and Valley Forge, and I thought of the long path that we had traveled from those years when Washington had led the colonial forces. I believe that if every American would read afresh the history of this country, and would visit the national shrines, that the flood of loyalty and patriotism would surge and tingle in his veins, and he would want to see every propagator of alien isms who is working for the overthrow of this movement, loaded into a ship and sent to some dictator-dominated land where he belongs. And it is a good thing to go back in memory, if not in person, to the old home where you first played in the green grass, built play houses beside the old rose bush, and saw wonderful castles in the glowing embers of the old fireplace. You may come away with tears in your eyes, but those will not wash from your vision much of the dust and

rubbish of a hurried life, giving you a clearer view of your duty, and leaving you humbler and yet braver for the task before you.

It is well for us to go back to that hour when first we learned to love and trust Christ as Savior. As you live over again those first hours and days of your Christian experience, as you experience again in memory the hope, ambition, aspiration, struggle, and longing of your early Christian life, you will find yourself filled with renewed desire to do the will of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Ah, so many people need to have once again that first love that thrilled and actuated them when they first came to know the Lord. Listen, if every one of you could have today the fresh ardor, the zeal, the spirit of devotion that you started out with as a Christian, you would amount to something as a Christian, but the world out here has chilled some of us, knocked the keen edge off of us, and that is the reason why Christians become careless about church attendance, that is the reason why they cease to talk about the Lord to other people, that is the reason they dry up in their giving, that is the reason there is no radiance in their lives. That was what was the matter with the church at Ephesus, and Jesus said to that church, **"...I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love"** (Rom. 2:4).

But now let us go further back from the old home, further back than our early Christian experience, further back than the formation of our country, back to that day when sin first cast its shadow across the pathway of man. If man had continued to obey God, he could have

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# Brief Truths

By Randy Johnson of  
Texarkana, Texas

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



## HOW CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO TREAT OTHER CHRISTIANS

Every single Christian one day will stand before Jesus Christ in judgment, not for our sins but for how we obeyed God's Word and exercised His commandments. Our sins were paid for by Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary. Every single drop of His blood was shed for the sins of every saint of God who believes. Therefore, the only judgment we have left is our works, and our works are according to the commandments of the Bible. Therefore, all Christians need to understand God's Word, and obey what God says. If we do not listen and hear God's Word and His commandments for us, we will lose rewards in judgment. Paul wrote about our judgment in I Corinthians 3:11-13, "**For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble. Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.**" So, Christians here is our warning from Jesus Christ about that judgment, "**He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches**" (Rev. 3:22). Here in our text passage, Jesus is talking about us being rewarded because of how we have treated Him, "**For**

**I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me**" (Matt. 25:35-36). But notice their response to Jesus, "**Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink**" (Matt. 25:37). They said Lord, we never saw you hungry, or naked, or sick, or in prison, Lord we were never able to do these things for you, so what are you saying? Now here is Jesus' response, please do not miss this response, "**And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me**" (Matt. 25:40). What Jesus has just said is "whatever you do to another child of God, you have done it to me." Please take the time to let this sink into your heart, whatever you do for another Christian you are doing it for Jesus. When you help another Christian in need it is like you are doing it to Jesus, also whenever you hurt another Christian it is like hurting Jesus, whenever you are loving other Christians it is like loving Jesus. Never, ever, forget those words. How much will you do for Jesus, if Jesus was in need how much would you help Him, then if you see another church member, or a fellow Christian in need then help

Jesus! That is not my words, that is not worldly wisdom, that is not an Arminian preacher begging for money, that is a commandment of Jesus Christ. It is a disgrace to see some Christians do without daily essentials while other church members and other Christians fail to help. If you saw Jesus doing without, would you help Him? Helping another Christian in need is helping Jesus! We will all learn on our judgment day that we were so wrong on so many things, so when we see in God's Word ways to correct wrong, take the opportunity to obey the Lord. The church, your pastor, and every believer in Jesus Christ you should do for as you would do for Jesus Christ. If you have and do not help, you will lose in judgment. The fire will burn-up your works like wood, hay, and stubble. Folks, if Jesus Christ is important to you, then take care of Jesus' earthly possessions, His church, His pastors, and your fellow brethren and sisters in need. If Christians are so mindless that they will not see a need and help, then their loss will be in judgment day. Please give this some thought and obey the Lord, and your reward will be eternal. Look for a need, and help. This is opportunity, do not miss opportunity.

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



## Genesis 3:19

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continued to live in the sunlight of His love, but disobedience brought punishment and sentence and humiliation, and in the text we have God reminding man of his humble origin. He says, "**Dust thou art.**" That means you are made out of dirt. People are prone to forget their humble origin.

There are people who think of themselves as blue bloods, and they say, "My great-great-great grandfather came over on the Mayflower." Maybe so, maybe so, but if they will trace their ancestry back far enough, they will find that their first ancestor, Adam, was made out of mud. That is what God told Adam. He said, "**...dust thou art,**" and what is dust? Dust with a little water added to it is mud.

When I think of false pride, I think of the story of the two women who were claiming distinction for their kinfolds. One woman said, "My brother stands at the very top of his profession. He is the very best of those among whom he works." "And my brother is at the top of where he works, too," said the other woman. "He is the best shoemaker in the penitentiary." Well, that was some distinction, but my friends, there is little for any of us to be proud of when it comes to our fallen humanity. When we think that we come from dust, when we think of our inherited fallen nature, when we think that we are headed back to the dust, then there is small ground for any of us to get puffed up. I think of that favorite poem of President McKinley. It was entitled, "Oh, Why should the spirit of mortal be proud," and one verse of it as I remember, goes something like this, "'Tis the wink of an eye, 'tis the draught of a breath, from the bloom of health to the paleness of death, from the gilded saloon to the bier and the shroud, Oh! why should the spirit of mortal be proud?" No, from the mere human, fleshly standpoint, there is not very much to be proud of, and man's origin is very lowly indeed, but there is something that lifts man up beyond the mere animal and physical, and that is

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# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

## 1. What was the doctrine of the Nicolaitans in Revelation 2:15?

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**"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ... So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate"** (Rev. 2:6, 15).

What is this Nicolaitan intrusion into the early churches that the Lord hates? Well, commentators are mixed, and even going back to the early centuries, to read after Tertullian or Irenaeus, one will get mixed responses. It is simply not something that we can be dogmatic about, but that does not mean we should not have a desire to avoid this doctrine and deeds that God poignantly points out twice as an abomination that He hates. Selah! Think about it!

It could simply be a warning to our churches, that there certainly are men that will creep in (some named Nicholas?) that will try to lead us astray, but there are warnings enough of Apostasy and Heresy in the Bible, and even in the seven letters to the seven churches (our context). So, I would like to examine the word itself and see what clues we might glean from a word study.

"Nikao" means "to conquer" and "Laos" means "the people or laity." So a simple definition of the Greek word "Nicolaitan" would be a system of doctrine

that "conquers the church membership." Hierarchy, in its early form must have been creeping into the churches of Ephesus and Pergamos. The layering of authority in the Lord's democratic assembly is a natural tendency of fallen man. As we see actually happening to the Lord's New Testament churches in the first few centuries, some dynamic leaders would rise up and a natural influence would naturally be felt, as these men preached for sister churches. Some would eventually start abusing their authority, which Biblically is restrained within the constitution of the local churches, and start interfering in other local churches. Many times this would be welcomed by weaker pastors and churches, and soon they would be looking to these energetic men of God for leadership and direction. Particularly, as churches would make affiliation amongst themselves, and eventually with secular powers, these local potentates would inflate with importance and eventually would rule over particular areas, as the Roman Catholic bishops and ultimately popes arose from this doctrine of Nicolaitans, and they ruled over the common people with undisputed sway. Selah! Think about it!

An emperor cannot reign without minions that are placed in positions of layered authority to report back and carry out what will ultimately be the decrees (bulls) and doctrines of their liege. Therefore the pope has national cardinals, regional bishops, parishional priests and other

titles and offices, as necessary to "conquer the people."

Even the Protestant churches, as they rely upon a universal, invisible body, limit the authority of the local New Testament style of churches. Presbyteries, councils, boards and other elected or appointed hierarchies of elevated men continue the Nicolaitan deeds of Pergamos, by appointing pastors, deacons and officers in the local churches under their unscriptural authority and sway. They take upon themselves license to send out missionaries, establish churches, and create creeds. The evangelizing, baptizing and catechizing authority given to local, New Testament churches in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20, has been usurped by these Protestant Nicolaitans!

Pharisaic in nature, the Lord has already warned against them in Matthew 23:5-10, 12: **"But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. ...whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."** Such a departure will lead to Matthew 24:49-51: **"And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh**

**not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."**

Ultimate Nicolaitanism (absolute power corrupts absolutely!) will degenerate into something not Christian at all, such as the Catholic Inquisition rearing its ugly head multiple times in history: **"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me"** (John 16:2-3).

May the Lord help us to follow the Apostle Peter's admonition. **"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock"** (I Peter 5:2-3). Selah! Think about it!

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**"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate"** (Rev. 2:6)... **"So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate"** (Rev. 2:15).

By comparing these two verses regarding the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, it is quite apparent

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# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What can you tell me of Judas Iscariot's father Simon as mentioned in John 12:4?

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I can find nothing about Simon the father of Judas Iscariot. The only thing of significance is that the name Simon is a Greek personal name meaning "flat-nosed."

Jesus referred to Judas Iscariot as a devil: **"Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"** (John 6:70). And as a traitor: **"And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor"** (Luke 6:16). Judas Iscariot betrayed our Lord: **"Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon"** (John 13:26).

I do not think, if I had a son that did such a thing as Judas, I would want anything said about me, as him being my son. Betraying Jesus would have been such a shame to the family and knowing you were the father of this devil would be difficult to bare. Not something I would want people to remember me by.

I am not sure even why it is pointed out that the name of Judas Iscariot's father was Simon, other than there are nine men in the New Testament named Simon. It may be to keep all nine

separated from each other, but that is speculation on my part, because I can find nothing else about this Simon. John Gill makes this statement concerning John 6:71: **"He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon:..."** These are the words of the evangelist, pointing out the person Christ intended, lest any other should be suspected: **"...for he it was that should betray him,"** as it was determined and foretold, and which Christ knew full well, and therefore said the above words: **"...being one of the twelve"** apostles, whom Christ had chosen, and which was an aggravation of his crime."

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Iscariot in the Hebrew is a designation of one from the town of Kerioth, a city in Judah, which could make Judas Iscariot the only definitive Jew, or a resident of Judea. The rest of the Apostles are likely from Galilee, and while still Jews (certainly not Samaritans), they were mostly what we would consider as "countrified" Jews! **"Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of**

**Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth..."** (John 1:44-46)? This is also seen in the contempt of the Pharisees in John 7:52: **"...Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."** Selah! Think about it!

At any rate, out of this distinction come many depictions of Judas Iscariot as a more "cosmopolitan" member of Christ's apostles. Since the Bible repetitively refers to him as "the traitor," "son of perdition," and "the betrayer," it is easy to think of him as a slippery rascal, that certainly deceived all, but the Lord, Who knew his blackguard heart and the desperately depraved nature of him that preached the gospel, baptized believers, sang the hymns and played so very well the role of stalwart follower of the Christ.

As to his family, and particularly his father, not much is really known. Four references in Holy Writ mention: John 6:70-71: **"Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve."** It is interesting that only John, among the gospel writers, mentions Simon, as the father of Judas Iscariot. Again, though, the fact that the more wealthy sons of Zebedee, (servants in their fishing boats) have more intimate knowledge seemingly of the Iscariot family, lends more credence to their family also being a family of wealth, or more aristocratic circles. Remember at the mock trial, the more affluent John had no trouble getting into the High Priest's palace, and had to open the door for the less genteel fisherman Peter. **"And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and**

**so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter"** (John 18:15-16).

The name Simon, is a common name in Scripture, but I could find no evidence, or even desire to link Judas Iscariot's father to any of them. Simon the Pharisee, Simon the Leper and even Simon Peter are all distinct characters of their own, and nothing ties them to the traitor and his father. Some say the dearth of knowledge is out of sympathy for Judas' father, that he be not tied to the infamy of his son.

The fact that Judas is called "the son of perdition" by the Lord, is not a reference to his earthly father, Simon, but rather his attribution to his spiritual father. **"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled"** (John 17:12). The only other time this title of Judas Iscariot is used is found in II Thessalonians 2:3: **"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."** This clear reference to the Anti-Christ has lead to speculation, that the son of Simon, might not be finished. **"That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place"** (Acts 1:25). What is that place for the

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# Forum Question #1

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that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of both of these local bodies, absolutely hated what the Nicolaitans were teaching and promulgating. The Lord commends the church at Ephesus for standing against the deeds and doctrine of the Nicolaitans. The Lord condemned the church at Pergamus for having those within their membership that held to and agreed with the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. Corrupt doctrine produces corrupt practice in individuals and in churches. When corruption in doctrine and practice is allowed to go unchecked, there is real danger in a church losing their candlestick or their authority to exist and identify as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The doctrine of the Nicolaitans, coupled with the doctrine of Balaam moved the Lord to warn the church at Pergamos that He would personally fight against them: **“Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth”** (Rev. 2:16). It is important that individual believers love what the Lord loves, and hate what He hates. This is the essence of true holiness in doctrine and practice. By way of extension, this principle also holds true in the membership of the local body of Christ, His New Testament church. We must agree with the Lord Jesus Christ and hate the doctrine and practice of the Nicolaitans.

There are lots of theories proposed by commentators regarding the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. However, I think the namesake of the doctrine reveals a great deal about why the Lord hated it. Nicolaitans

is a combination of two Greek words: *nike* which means to conquer, overcome, or be victorious over, and *laos* which means people. The doctrine of the Nicolaitans involved those who wanted to conquer and overcome people. I take this to mean that there were men within the churches who were seeking to usurp the authority of the church by way of domination, desiring to have preeminence over other members. They wanted to set themselves up as the final authority for faith and practice within the church. John had already exposed one man by name in III John 9-11: **“I wrote unto the church; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.”** This desire for preeminence and domination over the other members of the church was in essence the seeds of priestcraft and popery. It is evil, and the mark of a reprobate teacher. Paul warned against the infiltration of false teachers who he identified as grievous wolves when he charged the elders of the church of Ephesus to feed and protect that local body in Acts 20:28-30. Paul would also warn the church at Corinth against those who claimed they were of God, but instead were false apostles who had been called and empowered by Satan

in II Corinthians 11:13-15. Peter warned against false prophets and teachers who would attempt to bring in damnable heresies in II Peter 2:1-3. Jude gave a similar warning in his epistle (verses 3-4). These false teachers were identified as immoral, licentious, heretical, and promoters of works salvation.

The Roman Catholic Church is infamous for its hierarchy of rule and domination of its members with the Pope at the top all the way down to the priests at the local level. Their form of church government is that of a tyrannical dictatorship, rather than the scriptural model of a democracy where all the members are considered equals under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Though God has ordained that elders/pastors are to have the oversight of the church, they are not to lord it over God’s heritage or dictate to the flock of God. Instead they are commissioned only to lovingly lead and feed the flock of God, guiding the membership to submit to the leadership of the Head of the body, the Lord Jesus Christ. Any pastor/elder who seeks to have preeminence and dictate to the flock has the spirit of popery and is exhibiting the practice of the priestcraft. It is evil, and God hates it. That goes for any member of the church who tries to have preeminence and desires to conquer the other members. May God deliver His true churches from the doctrine of the Nicolaitans and any form of Baptist popery and priestcraft within its membership. As disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ we are commanded to love one another, not to have a perverted desire to rule, dictate, or dominate one another (John 13:34-35).

I like the observation of Henry Morris in his book, *The Revelation Record*:

“This danger was not unique to the early church, and Christ desires all churches to watch for, and repudiate, Nicolaitanism. The dangers are as real today. False prophets, false apostles, pseudo-miracles, people-conquerors, false teachers who deny the true divine/human nature of Christ, antinomian teachers who teach that God’s grace excuses deliberately licentious behavior, men who take authority and power to themselves that Christ never intended, are at least as great a problem in the modern church as in the early church. Christ hates the deeds of such as these, and so should we” (pages 52-53).

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**“But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate”** (Rev. 2:6).

We see first that the Lord is dealing with the church at Ephesus in (v. 1) and He at first expresses approval on their stand against evil doers (vv. 2-3). But then in (vv. 4-5) the Lord says He has a problem with them because they have left their first love (the Lord Jesus Christ), and that they need to repent. Then we see the Lord praise them again for their hatred for the deeds of the Nicolaitans, whom the Lord hates as well.

So, the question before us is, “What was the doctrine of the

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# Forum Question #1

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Nicolaitans" in (v. 15)? We know from (v. 6) that it must have been pretty bad for the Lord to say he hated their deeds (doctrine). I believe it was the following and teaching of Baalism, which is idolatry.

**"I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments"** (Ex. 20:2-6).

God hates idolatry (please read Galatians 5). Baalism is the name given to the worship of natural causes, tending to the obscuration and denial of the worship of God as Spirit. **"The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein"** (Ps. 24:1). In other words, God is in control of all things! Things just do not happen naturally.

The following is taken from the Holman Bible Dictionary: "NICOLAITANS Heretical group in the early church who taught immorality and idolatry. They are condemned in Rev. 2:6, 15, for their practices in Ephesus and Pergamum. Thyatira apparently had resisted the

false prophecy they preached (Rev. 2:20-25). The Nicolaitans have been linked to the type of heresy taught by Balaam (Num. 25: 1-2; 2 Pet. 2: 15), especially the pagan feasts and orgies that they apparently propagated in the first-century church. NICOLAS Personal name meaning "conqueror of people." One of seven Hellenists "full of faith and the Holy Spirit" chosen to administer food to the Creek-speaking widows of the Jerusalem church (Acts 6:5). Nicolas was a proselyte, that is, a Gentile convert to Judaism, from Antioch. Some church fathers connect Nicolas with the heretical sect of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:6, 15). The name, however, is common, and there is no other reason to associate this Nicolas with a sect active in Asia Minor."

I find it interesting what John Gill has to say about Revelation 2:15 and his mention about this doctrine and the church of Rome: **"So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans,** These impure heretics sprung up in the time of the apostolic church, but their doctrines were not received, and their deeds were hated, see Rev. 2:6. This seems to design the doctrines of the church of Rome, which in this period took place; which forbid marriage to the priests, and recommended celibacy and virginity to others also; which were the source of all uncleanness and abominable lusts; for which pardons and indulgences were given, and, in process of time, brothel houses were set up, and licensed and encouraged by authority, **"Which thing I hate;"** the doctrine of these men, as well as their deeds."

It is apparent that all seven of these churches in Asia did not heed the warnings of our Lord, because none of these churches

exist today. But, let us be careful that we do not fall into these same errors. It is sad to say, but many of the churches today have taken on these traits that the Lord hates. May God help us to be faithful and heed His warnings. God Bless!

ROGER REED



# Forum Question #2

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son of perdition? **"And I (John) stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. ...and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death (hanging?); and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast"** (Rev. 13:1-3). How interesting would be that latter day conflict between God's two witnesses of Revelation 11, one of which will be the Apostle John, who will be preaching God's truth to the dismay and vitriolic hatred of the son of perdition- if he would be the one that revelator John mentions so often as a traitor- Judas Iscariot. Selah! Think about it!

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Simon is mentioned as the father of Judas Iscariot in John 6:71; 12:4; 13:2, 26. We do not know

anything about Simon other than the fact that he was the father of a reprobate and false professor who turned out to be the most infamous character revealed in the four Gospels. Simon was the father of a man who would betray the Lord Jesus Christ for 30 pieces of silver. Judas did this in spite of the fact that he had personally traveled with the Lord for three and a half years. He had heard Christ's teachings, witnessed His mighty miracles, and saw His demonstrations of love and compassion. After betraying the Lord, Judas Iscariot was so overcome with guilt he went out and hung himself in an act of suicide.

I do not know much about Simon, but I have to believe that his heart was broken over being the parent of someone who was so notoriously wicked. It would be hard for me to live with the fact that I fathered the very person who would betray the Lord Jesus. The suicide of my own flesh and blood would also haunt me as long as I lived. Judas Iscariot must have grieved the heart of his father, as the shame of his son would forever be inscribed in Holy Scripture as the son of Simon.

What a warning to all parents! May we all have a greater sense of urgency in the training and rearing of our children. Let us pray fervently that God will save them by sovereign grace and give them a holy desire to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ all their days. Let us fervently pray for the Almighty to protect them from sin, the world, and the devil even as the Psalmist did: **"Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood: That our sons may**

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## Forum #2

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**be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace"** (Psalm 144:11-12).

TOM ROSS



## Genesis 3:19

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something that is mentioned here in the book of Genesis, the second chapter and verse 7, where it reads like this, "God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life." That is not said of the animal creation.

W. J. Bryan wrote a great book entitled *"The Blood of the Brute or the Breath of the Almighty--Which?"* That book was an attack on the brute theory of evolution, and Bryan went on to show that the animal has only the blood of the brute, but that man, made in the image and likeness of God, is endowed with the breath of the Almighty. That spiritual part that is God-given elevates us from the dust and makes possible a glorious destiny. All around us men and women are groveling in the dirt, living as if they were nothing but the product of the dust of the earth. That is what men and women are doing when they spend Saturday nights carousing around the joints. They are living like hogs. Yes, they are living worse than hogs. You can look into a hog pen and you will find that the hogs are all sober. A hog does not have much sense, but it retains what little sense it has. Hogs do not get drunk and try to devour and kill one another. I am telling you the truth, I do not see how human beings, and especially women, get trashy enough, low-down enough, to wallow around these old joints.

Why, even drunks ought to have a little bit of self-respect, and yet many a person can be found around these places, especially on Saturday nights. Where does that sort of life lead? Well, let us see what the Word of God says in Galatians 6:7-8. It says, **"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 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."** Notice it says there first, **"Be not deceived,"** that is, do not fool yourself. That is exactly what a great many people are doing. They think that they can live like brutes, get by with it, and God says they can not, and we know from observation that they can not.

In the second place, it says God is not mocked. You can not make a joke out of God, and mock God by telling Him that you can get by with what He says you can not get by with. Not in a few cases, not in one case out of a hundred or a thousand, can you violate the laws of God and the laws that govern your own welfare, and get by with it. In one hundred per cent of the cases, the man or woman who grovels in filth and flesh and is paying no attention to the spiritual part, ends in ruin. Listen, young people hearing me, when any person advises you that you can live a reckless, Godless life, sowing wild oats, and can suffer no harm, they are telling you a big lie. God says you can not do it, that you can not make a mock out of His laws.

In the third place, it says, **"...for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."** You can not sow black eyed peas and have pumpkins spring out of the ground. I have listened to many a

tale of woe through the years that I have been in the ministry. I have visited in jails and penitentiaries and hospitals and had person after person come to me in trouble, and in many cases, what did I see? I saw wild oats growing and coming to harvest, that is what I saw. And what does God say? He says he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. What does that mean? That means that when you live to gorge your appetite, live for a kick, live like a beast, that the inevitable end is corruption. Now maybe somebody does not know what that word "corruption" means. It means your body lying there under the ground with the worms eating the flesh off your bones, crawling in and out through your eye sockets, that is what it means, and I put it just as gruesomely as possible in an attempt to get you to see it. The doctor's offices are full of people who are there because they are sowing to the flesh. There is a hospital room at a hospital I am acquainted with that has been beautifully furnished as a memorial to somebody, and I am told that it costs \$10.00 a day, or used to back there, and costs more than \$20.00 a day now, to stay in that room, and I was told about a man in the city where I lived who every few days, used to be brought into that room to be sobered up. Sowing to the flesh! Soaking in alcohol, and going to the hospital to get sobered up!

Yes, and undertakers are busy burying people who would be walking our streets alive had they not sowed to the flesh. Any of us might take sick and die at any time, but God forbid that we should lie in the coffin cold and dead when it can be said of us, "He is lying there because he sowed to his flesh, and he has reaped corruption." I tell you, that thing

ought to be said a lot of times at funerals. Lying preachers, and I am sorry I have to say this, lying preachers stand there over the corrupting hulk of some old sin-soaked, liquor-soaked libertine and read the Holy Word of God which was designed as comfort concerning the Christian dead, and say, "The Lord has called him away." The Lord, nothing. He dissipated himself into the coffin. I tell you, it is sin and it is blasphemy for men to preach people into Heaven, when they have sowed to the flesh and of the flesh have reaped corruption. I want to tell you, I am not going to do it, either. There are more lies told at funerals than most any place you can think anything about, and when they are told, people think they are mocking God, that they are beating God, when they are just deceiving themselves. A man can try to preach a person into Heaven and his kinfolks can fool themselves into thinking that he is all right, but his soul is at that moment in the torments of that fire that never shall be quenched. **"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption..."** There is no way of beating that flame. Just as certainly as you sow to your flesh and live for the flesh, and pay no attention to the spiritual part of you, it is going to take you to the doctor's office, or the hospital, or both, and it is going to take you to the undertaking parlor, and it is going to take you to the cemetery, and it is going to take you to Hell, too.

Now let us review the other side. When God said to Adam, **"...dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return,"** He was

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# Genesis 3:19

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talking of the physical part of him, for as Longfellow, the poet, has said, "Dust thou art, to dust returneth, was spoken of the soul." And in the passage from which our text is taken, and in that passage which speaks especially about sowing to the flesh and reaping corruption, it also says, **"But" and listen to this, "...but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."** What does it mean to sow to the spirit? It means to give attention to the spiritual part of you that God has implanted within you. And God has made provision for the welfare of that spiritual part of you by providing a Savior. The human race fell in Adam, for he passed his fallen nature on to his children, and they to theirs, and so on down through the centuries until this present hour. That fallen nature leads people to live after the flesh, leads them to sow to the flesh, and without the help and grace of God, the whole race of us would sink into Hell just as naturally as a rock drops to the bottom of the well. But when we were lost in our trespasses and our sins, **"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"** (Rom. 5:8). Now here is God's proposition. He says, "Sinner, I gave my Son to die to pay the penalty of your sins. He willingly takes the place of a substitute for you, if you will receive Him as such, and if you will take Him, if you will trust yourself unto Him, I will give you a new nature, I will adopt you into my family, I will give you salvation, I will give you everlasting life. Your body of dust will go back to dust, but I will take your immortal spirit into My presence, and then someday,

I will even raise that body out of the dust to immortality." The fall of man means ruin, corruption, Hell, but the redemption in Christ Jesus means salvation, means eternal life, means immortality. I ask you, which way will you go, and which way are you going--the way of the natural fallen creature which leads to ruin, or the way of redemption that leads to life eternal? Every one of you must face a choice of one of these. There is not any chance or escape from making such a choice, whether we will or not, we have to choose the way of the flesh or the way of the spirit. One of the greatest purposes of my preaching in my ministry through the years has been to get people to choose Christ and to choose salvation, rather than the way of the flesh that leads unto death. My friends, I beg that you will not consider what I am saying lightly. Every one of us is heading for death, and the members of our families are headed for the same, and it is sheer insanity for us not to pay any attention to the soul and to the life that is to come. Nothing can stay death, and nothing can stay eternity. No! And there is no home in which death has not, or will not at some time, enter. Likewise, there is no life that shall not be affected by death. God's Word to Adam, **"...dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return."** holds good in the case of every one of us. But I invite you to look to a life that is beyond physical life, to look to that which is above the dust of man's body; the spirit, the soul, the real self that merely lives within the tenement house of clay. That is what I want you to think about today. And I present to you the Christ, the Savior, the only Savior, Who can secure for you the future of that soul of yours. Will you receive Him?

Will you stake your future on His power to save? Will you take Him as the One Who is able to give life, salvation, immortality? **"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."** This God said of the body, but the soul is not dust, and the soul cannot return to dust. When the body goes back to the dust, that soul of yours must wing its flight out into an eternity of some kind. Will your soul be ready and prepared for the future? What about it? He will bring peace, He will bring comfort, He will bring joy, He will bring salvation, He will bring life that is eternal. Receive Him, and then confess Him at the very first opportunity.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee that the words, **"...dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return"** were not spoken of man's soul, and that after the body goes into the grave, that the real self, the soul of a man, goes out into eternity. We are concerned that this eternity be for each person to whom we have been speaking, an eternity of happiness and joy and gladness and peace, and we pray that we have been able to show some to see Christ as the Savior, Who can assure for them an eternity of happiness, for we ask it in His name. Amen.



## Walk in the Light

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one; rather, the Lord seems to be issuing a warning to the Children of Israel, in regards to the awful fate that awaits those who will "walk in the light of your fire." If you do so, you will find that doom awaits. The first verse of our text gives hope to the one who will fear and trust the Lord, and who will be obedient unto Him. The second verse is a prophecy of judgment

for those who reject the Lord, and who trust in themselves.

In some ways I think this warning that is delivered to the unfaithful Israelites is similar in application and scope to that warning – or a declaration of present and future disobedience – that Joshua delivered to the Israelites, just before his death. **"And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good"** (Josh. 24:19-20).

I suppose we could say that this passage will serve as a warning to the saved, who may go astray from time to time, and who may experience dark days or dark times in this life. Maybe the darkness in the lives of those who are saved will consist of the pain, the troubles, the trials, and the difficulties that the people of God must endure in this life. In this dark world, and in the midst of dark times, we will find that the Lord is ours, and we can be propped up (stayed) on Him and His strength! The world is a dark place, but the Lord our God is light! In comparison to the fate of the wicked, who try to manufacture their own light in order to shed light on their wicked way; ours is a glorious way, and the path is filled with light, and leads to success and salvation.

But I believe the focus of our passage is on the unsaved, who are caught up in the misery, the terrors, the darkness of sin and flesh. These poor sinners who have been led to see their needs, and have recognized their awful plight, shall find rescue and deliverance – they shall find light – in the

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person and the work of Jesus Christ. That poor soul who has been brought to realize his present sinful (and dark) condition, must turn to God and find in Him the light of salvation. Those who reject such a Light and such a Saviour – and who depend upon the works of their own hands, will find that God will judge them, and will deliver them to sorrow, pain, suffering, and even eternal damnation.

As a whole, this text passage that we will study is a proclamation of hope to those who will obey the voice of Christ, and who shall find light and salvation in God and His Saviour. At the same time, our text passage will serve as a prophecy of sorrow and destruction for those who vainly imagine their own means of making light – a means of casting light on their way, and the wicked path that they trod. In contrast to the way and the light of the saved, the wicked and rebellious will find that their light is not very good; their path is not very smooth; their way is not straight.

## THE TERRIBLE DARKNESS

Mankind is fallen. Mankind is depraved. These terrible facts – though denied by the religious world – have cast a pall over humanity and subjected all men to a terrible darkness. This darkness is complete. It affects all men, and it affects all men completely. The account that God gives of the condition of mankind before the Great Flood, is applicable today, as well. **“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”** (Gen. 6:5).

The condition of evil men

everywhere, as we, in our natural condition, seek to make something of ourselves, and seek to find our way in the midst of darkness and wickedness, is described by the Lord Jesus in the Gospel of John. **“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved”** (John 3:19-20). The terrible darkness that men live in, exists because of sin – Adam subjected us all to sin and darkness. But, its strength is found in our own sinfulness, and the wickedness of each succeeding generation. Such a darkness which began with Adam, endures to this day, because we continue in sin. The darkness is terrible because of who we are, and what we have done after the flesh! Solomon said, **“The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble”** (Prov. 4:19). How can we hope to ever remedy such a condition on our own! How can we hope to ever find a light that will cast aside such awful and terrible darkness of our own devising and our own construction!

Those who have forsaken the Word and Law of God – and this is all of us, in our natural condition – will only find darkness in their lives, and will not be able to come to any light or knowledge based on their own efforts or their own understandings. **“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and**

**look upward. And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness”** (Isa. 8:20-22).

The cloud of darkness that pervades all aspects of the human nature, has brought a gloom and despair to men, as we each consider our own fate. **“Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help”** (Ps. 107:10-12).

## THE MAN-MADE LIGHT

As we think about the efforts that men put into making their own light, in order to light their own ways, I am reminded of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, and the strange or profane fire that they presented before the Lord. **“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before Jehovah, which commanded them not. And there went out fire from the the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace”** (Lev. 10:1-3). These two men were priests and servants of God. They knew that God was light, and they had been shown how to serve the Lord. And yet, they presented before God a strange fire, that might be described as profane, or man-made. The light they shone in the presence of God was of

their own making. This is what the Lord warned Israel of in our text passage. Sure, the light might be pretty. Sure, there might be a healthy-appearing flame that sprouts up for a while. But, to those men and women who compass themselves about with the sparks of light that come from their own profane or strange making – there is a terrible and awful judgment that awaits them!

I believe that the building of fires, and the walking in the light of the fire and the sparks that are mentioned in our text verses, could refer to a sinner trusting in his false gods which he has made, some of which are even fashioned in the fires of idolatry – trusting in false gods to save him. Certainly, the Children of Israel were prone to dabble in idolatry! **“And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see”** (Deut. 28:64-67). When they would forsake the light and knowledge of God for the light and knowledge of some man-made idol, inevitably, the Lord would punish and judge them. Their

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poor excuse for a light would be dashed out, and others would rule over them or even destroy them.

I believe that the man-made light referred to, and the sparks that are generated by this poor sinner – who has been made acquainted with the law of God, or who might be an Israelite who has grown up in observance of the Law – who thinks to put his trust in the Law to save him. The works and deeds of the Law – as a man will observe and perform them – could be compared to the man-made light of our text verses. Every little obedience; every little success; every tiny accomplishment in the Law, is pictured by the sparks that flutter around the person as he walks in the light of his own fire. Such a man, who lives his life subject to a pursuit of perfection in the Law of God – vainly imagining that obedience unto the Law could save him – is bound for disappointment in this life, and judgment in the life to come. We read in the Book of Job, **“Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him. The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down”** (Job 18:5-7).

I also believe that our text verses could be a warning to those religious Jews who thought to substitute, or add in their own traditions and teachings, as they lived in and proclaimed the Word of God, and the Law of Moses. These folks could be said to be substituting the light of their own knowledge, for the knowledge of

God – walking about in sparks that are a result of their own feeble attempts to change, adapt, or modify the Word of God – rather than walking about in the full light of God and His Son Jesus Christ. Any sinner who substitutes the traditions of men, and imposes man’s ways upon the Law of God, and who makes the way of God into the way of men, thinking that such a righteousness would be effective in salvation, is a fool, and is destined for judgment.

The ones who light their own fires, are comparable to such men as would devise their own means of salvation, or who might worship their own gods – gods of their own making. They reject God, and the light of His Word, and seek to substitute their own light. Such men and women will be judged of God – they will lie down in sorrow.

Conversely, as the first verse of our text delivers hope unto us, we find that even in this dark world (where light of some sort is a must!), those who will believe and trust in God will find a clearly lighted path. There will be a certain confidence in their bearing. Their trust in God and dependence upon Him will lend them greater strength – certainly, better visibility – as compared to those who labor to make their own way in this world, or who worship in a religion (and a god) of their own devising. In the end, the wicked and unbelieving will find that their own attempts to save themselves – their trust in man and in man’s gods – will be the means of their own destruction. Those sparks that they walk amongst, as they are described in our text verses, will serve to set them and their evil works on fire, and they will be destroyed. In the end, there will be sorrow for the wicked. This is certain. God’s

judgment will demand it.

There may be a price to pay in this life, as men, families, societies, or nations might be brought low, or punished in some fashion, when they deny God and His ways, and when they rebel against His authority. Especially, we can see that this is true in the case of Israel. However, God’s judgment of individuals – and of Gentiles and others who would follow after the time and place of Isaiah’s prophecy – will also be held accountable. Great sorrow is had in store for the wicked who will substitute their meager (and evil) lights for the light of God and Scripture! In the end, there will be no escape from such a thorough and holy judgment. The judgment will be delivered at the hand of God, and the finality and justice of His judgment cannot be disputed, denied, or thwarted. In the case of the wicked, we can say with the prophet Amos, **“Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it”** (Amos 5:18-20)?

## THE LIGHT IN THE DARK

Let me conclude by speaking to you of the “true light” – the light that brings life and holy sight to those who have previously walked in darkness. This is the hope of the righteous! This is the hope of those who will trust in the Lord, and who will find Him to be their stay – they will be propped up on Him – and find in Him the light necessary for salvation and success! **“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and**

**declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all”** (1 John 1:5).

The message of the Christian, the gospel that we share with the world, is meant to promote the light that is found in God and His Word, as opposed to the darkness and the wickedness that is found in the world and in the words and deeds of men. **“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”** (Matt. 4:14-17). The kingdom of Heaven is populated by those who repent of their sins and trust and believe in Jesus Christ as their Saviour. In Jesus Christ is Light. In the world there is darkness.

The Scriptures are full of descriptions, metaphors, and representations of God and creation, which show the stark contrast that exists between God and sin. In the Scriptures we see life as opposed to death; we see good as opposed to evil; we see God as opposed to Satan; we see peace as opposed to chaos; and, we see light as opposed to darkness. God is the champion of the light – Jesus Christ is the bringer of that light! **“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light,**

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**and kings to the brightness of thy rising"** (Isa. 60:1-3).

Mankind is prone to darkness, we remain in darkness because of our own sins. In fact, we tend to promote and increase darkness, the longer that we live on this earth. The only hope for change – the only light at the end of the tunnel (so to speak) – is Jesus Christ and the salvation that He has brought to mankind. **"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light...Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light"** (Eph 5:8, 14).

As the people of God are brought into the Way of Light, we will no longer be prone to make lights of our own making – we will not any longer walk in the light of our own fire which we have kindled; instead, we will walk in the way of the Lord, and we will trust in, and find our way in, the light that comes from God. **"And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods"** (Isa. 42:16-17).

I suppose that we could say that the light that enlightens us, is the Word of God. Or, we could say that the light that shines in our lives, is the Son of God. Either is applicable, since the Word of God necessarily reveals Jesus Christ to the believers. What a God and what a Saviour we have! The darkness flees at the coming of our

Lord Jesus Christ! **"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid"** (Ps. 27:1)? There is hope and strength – though we are hopeless and weak – for those who trust in the name of the Lord, and who are stayed upon our God! **"Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me"** (Micah 7:7-8).

In the New Testament, we read the words of Jesus Christ, **"And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind"** (John 9:39). The world of men, even the religious elements of mankind, who might think they can see, based upon their own wisdom, their own understanding, their own sight, or their own strength; will one day find that their sight and their strength is their own downfall. They are blind, they will fall in the ditch. Their fire is dangerous, and they will be consumed by the sparks. Instead, the Lord will give sight to sinners – those who come to the end of themselves, who admit their own blindness and helplessness, and who cast themselves, and the fate of their own souls, upon Jesus Christ. Your only hope – and my only hope – is to walk in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ. If the light of your fire is the Lord, then walk in that light, and find your way according to Him and His Word. This is the hope and salvation of men.

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



END



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.

## JUDGE BANS PRAYER, RELIGIOUS MUSIC AT GRADUATIONS FOLLOWING ATHEIST SUIT

(CH)--A federal district court has prohibited a South Carolina school district from including official student-led prayer and religious music in future graduations following a lawsuit from an atheist group called American Humanist Association.

The decision from U.S. District Judge Bruce Howe Hendricks prevents Greenville County Schools from knowingly allowing prayer from a student during a graduation. It also prohibits the school system from listing a prayer in the printed graduation program.

Hendricks, who was nominated by President Obama, wrote in his decision: "The district shall not include a prayer – whether referred to as a prayer, blessing, invocation, benediction, inspirational reading, or otherwise – as part of the official program for a graduation ceremony. The district also shall not include an obviously religious piece of music as part of the official program for a graduation ceremony. The district and/or school officials shall not encourage, promote, advance, endorse, or participate in causing prayers during any graduation ceremony."

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## TEXAS GOVERNOR SIGNS 'BORN ALIVE ACT' PROTECTING BABIES WHO ARE BORN ALIVE FOLLOWING A FAILED ABORTION

(CH)--Texas Governor Greg Abbott announced last week that he has signed into law a bill that would protect infants who were born alive after an attempted abortion procedure. The "Born Alive Act" creates a doctor-patient relationship between the infant and the doctor, which requires that doctors "must exercise the same degree of professional skill, care, and diligence to preserve the life and health of the child as a reasonably diligent and conscientious physician would render to any other child born alive at the same gestational age. Defends the sanctity of life and creates civil and criminal penalties for infanticide in Texas. It provides a baby who survives an abortion the full protection of the law in Texas and ensures that the baby receives the appropriate medical care."

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## TRUMP ADMINISTRATION BLASTS CHINA ON RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION: "THE STAIN OF THE CENTURY"

(CH)--The Trump administration took a three-pronged approach this week to addressing religious liberty violations around the world, and it aimed much of its critique at a global superpower: China. The U.S. State Department hosted its second-annual Ministerial To Advance Religious Freedom, with Secretary of State Michael Pompeo labeling China a leading violator of religious freedom. Mr. Pompeo stated, "China is home to one of the worst human

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rights crises of our time. It is truly the stain of the century.” Vice President Mike Pence also addressed the assembly and called out China’s “religious persecution.”

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## NEW ENGLAND, NORTHEASTERN CITIES NAMED ‘MOST POST- CHRISTIAN CITIES IN AMERICA’

(CH)--Eight northeastern and New England cities earned top spots on Barna Group’s annual list of most “post-Christian” cities. The list names places where the fewest people follow Christian beliefs. The Springfield-Holyoke area in Massachusetts topped the list. About 60 percent of residents said they had never made a commitment to Jesus and 65 percent said they had not attended church recently. Nearly 90 percent said they had not read the Bible that week. Other areas on the list were Portland-Auburn, Maine; Providence, Rhode Island-New Bedford, Massachusetts; Burlington, Vermont; Boston, Massachusetts-Manchester, New Hampshire.

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## JUDGE UPHOLDS OKLAHOMA BAN ON ‘DISMEMBERMENT ABORTION’ IN HISTORICAL DECISION

(CH)--An Oklahoma state judge on Friday upheld the state’s ban on a common late-term abortion procedure, making it the first time a judge in the U.S. has reviewed such a law and not overturned it. Oklahoma County Judge Cindy Truong handed down her decision from the bench. The lawsuit was brought by the Center for Reproductive Rights and Tulsa Women’s Clinic, an abortion clinic. Truong upheld a 2015 law that bans dilation and evacuation (D&E) abortion, a procedure that involves

the dilation of the cervix and the removal of the unborn baby by literally pulling it apart, limb by limb – pulling out an arm, a leg, the head, and so forth. Pro-life groups refer to the procedure as “dismemberment abortion.” Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter called Truong’s decision “a major victory for basic human decency in Oklahoma.”

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## BOSTON BANS CHRISTIAN FLAG BUT APPROVES 284 OTHER ONES

(CH)--The city of Boston is engaging in unconstitutional discrimination against religious speech by banning the Christian flag from its City Hall flagpoles while permitting more than 200 other types of flags to fly, according to a new federal lawsuit. At least 13 times between 2005 and 2019, the city allowed the Turkish flag -- with its Islamic star and crescent -- to be raised on city hall flag poles, the suit says. The city also allowed the Chinese, Cuban and Vatican flags to fly on city hall flag poles. All total, according to the suit, 284 different types of flags have flown. Not mentioned in the new suit are transgender and LGBT pride flags, both of which have flown.

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## COURT OKS TRUMP RULE DEFUNDING \$60 MILLION FROM PLANNED PARENTHOOD

(CH)--The often-criticized U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals handed a major victory to pro-lifers and the White House Thursday when it ruled the Trump administration can enforce a new rule that could result in Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers losing tens of millions of dollars. The president of Planned Parenthood called the ruling “devastating news.” At issue is federal money for Title X, a \$300 million family-planning program for birth control, cancer screenings

and STD testing. The new rule by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), supporters say, ensures that none of the money goes toward promoting abortion or conducting abortion. Critics call it the “gag rule.” Planned Parenthood receives an estimated \$60 million annually in Title X funding.

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## INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS CHINA’S SCHOOLS TEACHING CHILDREN TO ‘HATE GOD’ AND DISTRUST CHRISTIAN PARENTS

(CH)--Children in China’s primary schools are now being taught that belief in God is abnormal and that parents who are religious should not be trusted, according to a report out of the country. The new direction is part of the country’s crackdown on Christianity under the New Regulations of Religious Affairs that took effect in February 2018. Essentially, schools are grooming children to be atheists, teaching them that religion is “Xie jiao,” a Chinese expression that references anything that is heterodox and should not be trusted. Children are “taught to oppose their religious relatives” and that “believing in God is abnormal.” One son reportedly told his Christian mom, “My teacher says that Christianity is a Xie jiao. If you believe in it, you will leave home and not take care of me. You might set yourself on fire, too.” One teacher told the children, “If your mom goes to church and believes in God, she doesn’t want you as her child anymore.” The school textbook, Morality and Society, teaches children to resist Xie jiao religious groups.

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## KIDS GROUP VOLUNTEERS BANNED FROM LIBRARY FOR SINGING CHRISTIAN SONGS WITH CHILDREN

(CH)--A church-run kids group

has been banished from a public library after being told that they were not allowed to sing songs that made reference to Biblical stories. The volunteers at Noah’s Ark playgroup says it had been meeting at the Burgess Hill Library in the British county of West Sussex for eight years -- they had never encountered any issues until now. Despite the group serving the local community for free, library officials demanded that they move elsewhere after some parents complained that they were unhappy with the Christian message contained within the songs.

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## NETANYAHU: NEW PHILISTINE DNA STUDY AFFIRMS THAT ISRAEL IS JEWISH LAND

(CH)--New DNA research indicating the biblical Philistines originated from Europe bolsters the case that the land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people, says Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Scientists studied the DNA of skeletons from a 3,000-year-old Philistine cemetery and published their findings last week in the journal Science Advances. The study showed the DNA was related to the gene pool of southern Europe.

Netanyahu stated, “A new study of DNA recovered from an ancient Philistine site in the Israeli city of Ashkelon confirms what we know from the Bible -- that the origin of the Philistines is in southern Europe.” Netanyahu then referenced Amos 9:7 and Jeremiah 47:4, which say the Philistines came from Caphtor -- modern-day Crete, the Greek island in southern Europe. He then stated, “The Bible mentions a place called Caphtor, which is probably modern-day Crete. There’s no connection between the ancient Philistines & the modern Palestinians, whose ancestors came from the Arabian Peninsula to the Land of Israel

♦ (Continued on page 22)

## Bible & the Newspaper

(Continued from page 21) ♦

thousands of years later." Netanyahu concluded, "The Palestinians' connection to the Land of Israel is nothing compared to the 4,000-year connection that the Jewish people have with the land."

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### ARCHAEOLOGISTS BELIEVE THEY HAVE FOUND THE ANCIENT BIBLICAL CITY OF ZIKLAG

(CH)--A team of Israeli archeologists has announced the discovery of an ancient Biblical city. The Israeli Antiquities Authority, Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Macquarie University of Sydney, Australia issued a joint statement saying that they had uncovered the city of Ziklag, which was mentioned multiple times in the Bible.

Ziklag is referenced in relation to David, who was granted sanctuary in the city along with his army, with the permission of Achish, King of Gat. The site is believed to be where David was anointed as the King of Israel. The most famous mention of the city is found in I Samuel 30, which describes the destruction of the Amalekites. Ziklag is also mentioned in the book of Nehemiah as a place where Jews returned to after being exiled in Babylon.



## The Short Pews



Brief Articles  
by Curtis Pugh  
(1944 - 2018)

### A CHILD BORN AND A SON GIVEN

The Bible is precisely correct. It always is. For instance consider this prophecy, **"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace"** (Isa. 9:6). The Son of God was already in existence at creation. It is said of Jesus, **"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made"** (John 1:3). Other Scriptures indicate that the Father and the Holy Spirit were also involved in creation. Jesus was and is the Son of God – just as much God as is the Spirit and the Father. Being co-equal and co-eternal with the Spirit and the Father, as the Son of God, He could not be born. As Isaiah wrote, **"a son is given."** Whose son? The Son of God! The Bible is right!

Isaiah also said, **"unto us a child is born."** The Son of God became the Son of man. God formed

Him in the womb of the virgin Mary, thus He escaped the curse that is upon all the descendants of Adam. He was not the seed of a man, but was called the **"seed"** of the woman when God cursed the serpent in Eden (see Genesis 3:15). The **"child"** had a beginning. The Son did not!

In Christ's coming as a man God the Son took upon Himself not just a sinless body in such a way that Jesus was a sort of "zombie." Rather God the Son took unto Himself a complete human person. This is the miracle of God in the flesh. Paul wrote, **"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh..."** (I Tim. 3:16). This revealed mystery is beyond human understanding. We can only take it by faith. The incarnation is unique: one of a kind. There never was before or since anything like it!

After specifying that while a child would be born and at the same time the Son of God would be given, Isaiah goes on to speak of His greatness. Eventually He shall openly and directly rule all creation for **"the government shall be on his shoulder."** His names are these: **"Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."** Ah! He is a man, yet He is **"The mighty God," "The everlasting Father," "The Prince of Peace."** These names reveal who He is!

**"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him [Jesus], and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"** (Phil. 2:9-10). Some

people confess His deity now: the confession of all others will come, but will come too late.



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### Jesus Glorified, and the Sinner Encouraged

By James Smith  
(1802 - 1862)

**"Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified"** (John 12:23).

Sinners seldom think aright in reference to themselves, their God, or their Saviour. When a man begins to feel his true state, and to see his real condition, he immediately begins to think that there is no mercy for him, and he fancies that Jesus will not receive him. It never enters into his mind, that Jesus receives none but such characters as he discovers himself to be; or that Jesus can be glorified in his salvation, and is well-pleased to see him weep and pray. But such is the case. A few Gentile sinners desired to see Jesus; Philip and Andrew tell Him so, and He immediately replies, **"Now is the Son of man glorified."** If language means anything, this expression of Jesus means that the coming sinner glorifies Him. He loves to save sinners; it is not only His work, but His delight; no one was ever half so much pleased with His employment as Jesus is; it just suits His nature, gratifies His tender loving heart, and increases

♦ (Continued on page 23)



# Funnybone

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

Mrs. Brown: Honey! Wake up! Honey! There is burglars in the house."

Pastor Brown: (snore, snore, snore)

Mrs. Brown: "For the love of life, wake up or we'll be murdered in our bed!"

Pastor Brown: (snore, snore)  
"Hun?" (snore, snore)

Mrs. Brown: "I think I hear them plundering in the kitchen, get up and go run'em off."

Pastor Brown: (snore) "Ain't much fer them to take." (snore, snore)

Mrs. Brown: "I think they're in the parlor now, I hear paper rustling."

Pastor Brown: (snort, snore) "Reading will do 'em good" (snore).



Mrs. Brown: (determined) "I hear them in your study stacking up books!"

Pastor Brown: "Stacking books! Let me get my sword and I'll go straighten 'em out!"

Mrs. Brown: "Your going to take your Bible and preach 'em out?"

Pastor Brown: "Nah mam! I'm going to use my other sword, the one with buckshot!"



## Gleanings

(Continued from page 22) ♦

His pure and holy joy. He is glorified when poor souls come to Him as sinners, having nothing to plead but His Word; nothing to appeal to but His mercy; nothing to present, but their lost and ruined persons. When they come with ardent desires, crying, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me:" desires which none can satisfy but Himself; desires which nothing will meet, but a full and free salvation.

Jesus is glorified, when we come to Him as a Saviour; to be saved from sin, wrath, and death, by his obedience, blood-shedding, and intercession. When we come to Him as the great Teacher sent from God, to be taught to know, believe, and do the truth. When we come to Him as Physician, to be healed of the disease of sin, and prepared to glorify God in our body, soul, and spirit, which are His. We glorify Him, not by doubting His power, willingness, or tender love; but by believing His invitation and faithful promises.

He is not glorified by our slavish fears, unfounded suspicions, or guilty shyness; but by our hope in His mercy, our earnest prayer, our steady reliance, our confidence in His Word, and our humility before His throne. And when we have found mercy and enjoy peace. He is glorified by our grateful love, fervent zeal, prompt obedience, and diligence in spreading His fame.

The hour is come, and Jesus is glorified, when many come together: when great sinners come: when they come who have long delayed, and wickedly refused to come before. He is also glorified when the coming sinner receives His pardon, feels in himself that he is healed, opens his mouth in praise, runs in the way of His commandments, fixes his streaming eyes on the cross, and devotes his entire person to His service. The salvation of the sinner glorifies the blood which procured his pardon, the righteousness which justifies him from all things, the grace which sanctifies his nature, and the mercy which pitied him in his lost condition.

Reader, what encouragement is given thee to come to Jesus! Do you not see, that in coming you not only obtain an eternal salvation for yourself, but you please, delight, and glorify the Saviour also? Are you discouraged? Think of this. Believe this, and thy fears will flee, thy doubts must depart, and confidence and peace succeed. Have you never come to Jesus? Do you not need salvation? Can you obtain it without an application to Him? You cannot. Without Him you perish, and perish for ever. Come to Him, and you live. Stay away from Him, and you die in your sins. Come then to Jesus. Come at once. Approach

♦ (Continued on page 24)

### BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

#### Financial Report

6-1-2019 to 6-30-2019

Beginning Balance .....\$10,710.16

#### RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS ..... 300.00  
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL ..... 60.00  
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX ..... 50.00  
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV ..... 200.00  
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY ..... 150.00  
Carol Willett, Georgetown, TX ..... 60.00  
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL ..... 25.00  
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY ..... 100.00  
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR ..... 12.50  
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME ..... 20.00  
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY ..... 100.00  
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC ..... 50.00  
Grace Missionary B. C. Tulsa, OK ..... 70.00  
Indore B. C., Indore, WV ..... 100.00  
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC ..... 50.00  
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH ..... 100.00  
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN ..... 50.00  
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL ..... 100.00  
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR ..... 50.00  
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS ..... 25.00  
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX ..... 30.00  
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA ..... 25.00  
Subscriptions ..... 120.00  
Anonymous ..... 330.00  
Dividing checks ..... 150.00  
Sub Total ..... \$2,327.50  
TOTAL ..... \$13,037.66

#### EXPENDITURES:

Printing ..... 490.00  
Postage ..... 523.35  
Wages ..... 2,300.00  
FICA ..... 175.96  
Dividing checks ..... 150.00  
Total Expenditures ..... \$3,639.31  
ENDING BALANCE ..... \$9,398.35



### BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

#### Financial Report

6-1-2019 to 6-30-2019

Beginning Balance .....\$2,341.52

#### RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS ..... 225.00  
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY ..... 100.00  
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY ..... 100.00  
..... 425.00  
TOTAL ..... 2,766.52

#### EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time ..... 363.98  
Program production ..... 195.00  
TOTAL EXPENDITURES ..... 558.98  
..... 2,207.54  
Interest ..... +.02  
ENDING BALANCE ..... \$2,207.56



# Gleanings

(Continued from page 23) ♦

Him, for His throne is before thee, His eye is upon thee, the word of salvation is sent to thee, His hand is stretched out to receive thee, and when you fall at His feet and cry from the heart, "Jesus, save me, save me by thy grace, save me to thy glory, save me for thy mercy's sake!" then He will say, **"The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified"** in the salvation of this sinner."

Believer, was it not a happy hour, when we first came to Jesus, and found Him faithful to His Word? Does it not cause thy bosom to glow with gladness, to think that Jesus can be, and is glorified in thy salvation? What a source of consolation is this--Jesus is glorified in saving me! Jesus was glorified when I came and fell before Him, feeling that I was not worthy to look up to His throne, or speak one word in His presence; when I cried for mercy at His hands, and found Him gracious, kind, and true. And Oh! delightful thought, Jesus will be glorified in my salvation throughout eternity! Oh, the pleasure He will feel when the myriads of His redeemed surround Him and ascribe all their salvation unto Him!

*Trembling sinner, cease thy doubting,---  
Look to Christ, the sinner's friend;*

*He is now thy soul inviting,---  
To His precious words attend:  
Come, poor sinner,---  
Come to me, the sinner's Friend,  
I am ready to receive you;  
I will peace and pardon send;  
Come to me,---I will relieve you,  
On my faithful word depend:  
Come, poor sinner,---  
Come to me, the sinner's Friend.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Philadelphia Baptist Church of Decatur, Alabama has called Elder George Kelly as pastor and he has accepted the call. Please remember this church and their new pastor in your prayers.

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The Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs is in search of a pastor.

For a statement of faith you can visit the church website at <http://GraceBibleBaptist.webhop.org> or <http://gracebbc.dyndns.org:81/>.

You may contact any of the following for more information: Keith Laurence (225) 664-3557, Lucien LeSage (225) 803-9710, or Charlie Andrews (225) 200-1171.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Grace Landmark Baptist Church of Buckhannon, WV, is seeking a pastor. The church is Sovereign Grace and Landmark in doctrine and practice. Any interested called pastor of like faith may contact Brother Brad Butcher at (304) 669-4738 or (304) 745-6226.

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The Stephens Branch Baptist Church of Martin, Kentucky is in need of a pastor. They are an Independent, Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Missionary Baptist church holding to the doctrines of grace and the King James Bible.

If you are interested in being considered or would like more information on the church you can call Brother Lonnie Edwards at (859) 629-1413 or write the church at: Stephens Branch Baptist Church, 1025 Stephens Branch Road, Martin, Kentucky 41649.

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

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

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

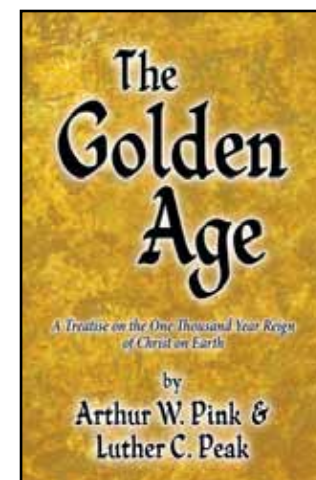
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The Victory Baptist Church of Chehalis, Washington is in need of a pastor. Any interested brother may call Gerry Greisen at (360) 985-7975, or Mark Fenison at (360) 751-2929.

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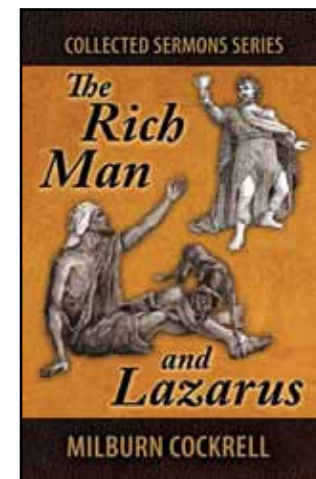
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## Now Available!



We are pleased to announce that *The Golden Age* by Arthur Pink and Luther Peak is available. This book will be sent free to any prisoner that requests it. Retail price \$8.00. Paperback, 87 pages. 50% discount given on orders of five or more.

## Also Available



We are pleased to announce that *The Rich Man and Lazarus* by Milburn Cockrell is available. A simple book dealing with the account given by Christ. This book will be sent free to any prisoner that requests it. Retail price \$4.00. Paperback, 31 pages. 50% discount given on orders of five or more.

(\$5 Flat rate shipping on all bookstore orders).

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