

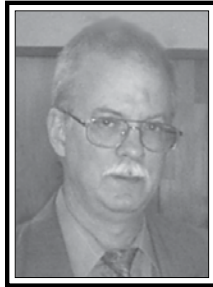
The Berea Baptist Banner

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

Law and Order!

By Lucien J. LeSage Jr.
of Pride, Louisiana

Do we need it? If, so then why? There has been a lot on the news about de-funding the police. Trump has said he is the Law and Order president. We saw in a zone in Seattle (where the police were not present and the mayor said it was just going to be a "summer of love") that it turned into anarchy and a couple people murdered. So why do we need law and order? And if we do, does that mean that every police officer is innocent of



bad behavior?

The answer is very simple yet it is a spiritual one. The answer is in God's Word, but the problem

lies in the fact that most people of a liberal mindset do not even consider that the Bible has any authority on the matter at hand.

Think about this statement by the Apostle Paul: **"Knowing**

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It Is Time to Work

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law" (Ps 119:126).

All of us are lazy from time to time, some of us more than others. A symptom of depravity is laziness. I suppose that the laziness of men has probably never been more evident than it is in today's society. We live in a world where men and women are able to live



lazy lives, and still prosper.

Sadly, this attitude has affected many of the saved, as well. Gone are the days of our

forefathers, when every man's success depended, at least in part, on the amount of focus, energy, and hard work that he would put forth. The industrious and

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Study of the Bible

By Joseph Alden
(1807 - 1885)

God has written a book for our benefit. Hence it is our duty to study it and to seek to derive from it all the benefit it was intended to convey.

The Bible gives us knowledge of infinite value, which could be

obtained from no other source. It makes known to us truths concerning God which we could never learn from nature, nor from the highest exercise of reason. Nature teaches us that God is infinitely wise and powerful, and that He is infinitely just. The mere suspicion of injustice on the part

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The Sharpest Barb

By Matthew Stepp
of Wayne, West Virginia

"Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. Did not Moses give



you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?" (John 7:16-19)?

The Pharisees had a pretty tough battle on their hands in these hard chapters of the gospel of John concerning the doctrine of Jesus of Nazareth. Constantly, the Lord

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

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

Law and Order!

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this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine" (I Tim. 1:9-10).

So here we are. If all men were righteous then we would not need law. But the problem is that men are born in sin, and are born sinners and law breakers. Paul said again "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10-12).

Christians, before regeneration, all have this very same nature, for the Bible says, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:1-3).

The greatest proof from the Bible of what I am saying can be found from an account of the time of Christ's Millennial Kingdom on earth, which is yet future.

What will be the nature of this future kingdom we might ask? It will be one of peace and justice. Concerning Jesus Christ, Isaiah tells us that "...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. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever..." (Isa. 9:6-7). It will be a time in which Jesus Christ will sit on His throne in Jerusalem and will rule the entire world in righteousness. The nature of this government will not be a democracy but a theocracy.

The fact that there are sinners during the Millennial reign of Christ is proven from the fact that Jesus rules the earth with a "rod of iron." If everyone is in love with God, in love with holiness, and in love with righteousness, then there is no need to rule with a rod of iron as we are told by the Bible. "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19:15). This will be a time of LAW as Isaiah tells us "for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." That sinners will be rebuked during this time is clear from Micah who says, "And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of

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Berea Baptist Banner
PO Box 39
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Light Contemplations

By Luke Austin
of Cadillac, Michigan

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

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

In times of strife and division much is said of the gospel. Many false and twisted ideas about the Gospel of Jesus Christ are pushed by false preachers and deceivers. They try and mold and change the gospel message. They try to soften the sharp edge of the gospel. The gospel is not about black or white, skinny or fat, rich or poor. It is not to be tailored to specific audiences. The gospel has one audience, the descendants of Adam.

So then what is the gospel? That you are a sinner by nature (Eph. 2:3) and that by your nature you choose sin. Not only do you choose sin, but you love sin. You have no ability to free yourself from the bondage you are in to sin. You cannot quit, you can not "drop the habit" and walk away. This same nature that makes you love sin also makes you hate God. It puts you at opposition to God and you are an enemy of God. (Rom. 8:7) God is the antithesis of sin. He stands in opposition to sin by His very nature. His nature is purity and perfection, uprightness and justice. He is the very fullest expression of Holiness.

Think on this for a moment. God Who is eternal and limitless and completely content within the Godhead; Who needs nothing from you and can gain nothing from you; Who needs no help from you; Who has no obligation towards mankind; Who owes no man a single blessing. He owes no man a single drop of rain. He owes no man his next breath. He

owes no man his next heartbeat. He does not owe the whole of creation another moment of time. This same God Who you by nature and by choice offend daily. This same God Who you hate. Sent His Son to die for you.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:6-10).

Read those 4 verses. Then read it again. Christ Who is God eternal made flesh, took on the form of a servant to die for the ungodly. He died to reconcile His enemies to Himself. The gospel does not need help. It does not need to be watered down. It does not need to adhere to the next social justice movement. The gospel IS **"...the power the of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth"** (Rom. 1:16). Jesus Christ took my sins to the cross. He shed His blood to wash me from my sins. He was buried and on the third day He rose again. Can you believe that message for the atonement of your sins? All of

your sins. Is the death of the Son of God on your behalf enough to save you? Do you think you even need saving? To those who know beyond any doubt that they need a Savior, Christ is always found to be more than enough.

So to conclude is there racism in the world? Preach Christ. Is there injustice in the world? Preach Christ. Is there drug use in the world? Preach Christ. Rape? Murder? Incest? Adultery? Drunkenness? Liars? Hatred? Is there every form and manifestation of sin and vileness in this sin cursed world? Of course there is but what is the answer to any symptom of sin? The Gospel of Jesus Christ. He is the only One Who can truly bring real and lasting change. Reform will not do, only a miracle, a new creature can truly change that which is broken by sin.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17).

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



Law and Order!

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his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Micah 4:2-3). Glorified saints in the eternal kingdom, which will follow the millennial kingdom, do not need to be governed with

a **"rod of iron"** and there will be no need to **"rebuke"** them for they will all be without sin like unto their savior. Remember what Paul tells us; **"the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners"** (I Tim. 1:9).

Oh, and how does the Millennial Kingdom end after the 1,000 years are finished? Has the only true utopia, since the fall, changed man? Has anything short of regeneration by the Holy Spirit changed man? Can anything short of the New Birth fix man? No, a thousand times no! Man is under the curse of sin. And although the curse will be greatly removed from the earth during the Millennial reign, and man's depravity kept in check, yet man is still dead in his sins. Dead is dead, and without spiritual life being granted, even seeing the King of Kings will not bring life and a new heart. Without the quickening of the Holy Spirit men remain lost and dead in sin. After the thousand years has expired we are told in Revelation 20:7 that **"Satan shall be loosed out of his prison."** And what do men do? Do they reject Satan and follow Jesus Christ? Or do they rebel? And if they rebel, how many take part in this rebellion? A few, or many? Is it one nation, or many? Is the rebellion from one location, or is it global in nature? The answer is almost beyond comprehension when we understand the righteousness and just rule that has gone forth from Jerusalem and the peace the world has experienced. For we read, **"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four**

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Law and Order!

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quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (Rev. 20:7-9). You will see the term **"the number of whom is as the sand of the sea"** used in Scripture to mean a number so great that it cannot be numbered. This great multitude of the future **"went up on the breadth of the earth"** which suggests a number so great that it covered a wide extent of the earth according to the lexicon. And this great number will come from every corner of the earth.

Now is there any wonder that the "summer of love" in Seattle ended the way it did? This is just a recent example that the Bible is true when it tells us about the depravity of man.

One last statement by Paul! **"For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil"** (Rom. 13:3-4).

Just remember there are sinners in every walk of life and some are very evil. And I agree these have no place in law enforcement. But what many on the left are advocating will result in total anarchy.

Yes, we need law and order because of the sinful nature of fallen man.

(Lucien LeSage is a member of the Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs, Louisiana.)



It Is Time To Work

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innovative nature of yesterday's America has been greatly diminished in today's generation.

Donald Trump has a slogan, "Let's make America great again." This is a noble ambition. This seems to be a patriotic attitude. And yet, nothing will come of such a desire unless men and women will apply themselves, and diligently labor in their chosen fields.

Our text verse speaks of the Lord God, Who made Heaven and Earth, and refers to His work that He would do, and to the way in which He will work through men. I want to think, for a little while, about the prospect of the work that God will accomplish in the short time that may be left for this world, and the work that we should be accomplishing, as well.

It is time to work, for time is almost ended. In fact, the time is near when all work or laziness will be ended in this life. It appears that the return of the Lord us upon us. He will now work out His will for these last days. I wonder, what will be our part in these last days? Will we work alongside our God as a part of His will and purpose? Or, will we stand by while our Lord uses others who are more willing, to accomplish and further His purposes? Remember, the end of all things is upon us. It is time to work.

THE LORD WILL WORK

Always working in material and physical matters.

The Lord is always at work. He

is the Creator and the Sustainer of all life, and of all of creation. He is a creative force and a force of life upon which all of life, and all of creation depends. Though men may not acknowledge Him, He is at work, even now, granting life, giving the continued breath of life, providing for, and protecting the lives of men, women, and children, all around this globe, and all across the centuries of man's existence on the face of the earth. **"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist"** (Col. 1:15-17).

Accomplishing His Will.

The Lord has a will and a purpose to accomplish in this creation. As a part of His creative and sustaining powers, He is constantly working to fulfill His desires. Of course, man cannot thwart Him, though he has tried. Of course, angels cannot prevent Him, though they have tried.

Sovereign in His Work.

The work of the Lord is both invincible and inevitable. He is an invincible force, in that none can stay His hand. **"But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased"** (Ps. 115:3). But, as the One Being Who stands apart from space and time, it is also inevitable that His will and purpose will be accomplished. He knows the end from the beginning. **"And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose**

dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou" (Dan. 4:34-35)? The in-between, in which we live, is only the place and the time wherein He achieves that which He has pre-determined to do. Now is the working out of His will. Now is the time for the Lord to work.

Working, even in Evil Times.

And, as the end of this Age draws nigh, we know that the work of the Lord is evident in the bringing about of the judgment of this world, and the rescue of the saints of God. Do not imagine that the world has spiraled out of the control of the God Who has made it! **"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it"** (Isa. 46:9-11). Do not imagine that humanity has gone where the Lord did not expect, and to a place from which the Lord cannot recover His people! Do not vainly imagine that men have gotten to the place where God will just throw up His hands and give up! No, the Lord is still in control, and He is still working. Even now, at the end, this is still a

♦ (Continued on page 5)



Narrow Paths

By Doug Newell IV of
Clendenin, West Virginia

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

THE LORD IS MY HELPER

Psalms 120-134 are a collection of Psalms titled, "Songs of degrees," which means songs for going up. They were traveling songs and most likely a collection the saints sang as they made their way up to Jerusalem. The faithful left their homes and traveled to God's appointed place of worship. Depending on where you lived, it could take anywhere up to five days for some to make it (Luke 2:41). If everyone was going up to the feast, the road would be full of travelers. Families would travel together and communities linked up and a caravan of the godly making their way to the worship of God. As they traveled to worship, they sang the songs of Zion.

And when they left the house, it probably did not seem like too bad a trip. Just a couple days. But after walking all day in the hot sun, and sleeping on the ground in the cool moonlight, knowing you are going to have to do it the next day, and the day after, and the day after, and then you STILL have to come back home, it could get discouraging. Psalm 121 is a hopeful song. The underlying theme of the song is that the journey is tough. But the main theme is God will see us through.

As we make our pilgrimage to our Heavenly home, it is often a hard road. There are problems, trials, temptations and setbacks we all face on our pilgrimage. But God's people can go through life hopeful that the Lord will see

us through. Psalm 121:1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. The Psalmist must lift up his eyes because he was still in the valley. He had not yet made it to his destination. His eyes were downcast, but with faith, he lifted them and looked to where his help comes. His help comes from the Lord. By faith, he is making his way to the worship of the Lord walking in the will of God and doing what God has commanded him to do.

He lifts his eyes up to the hills, but there are hills yet to climb. God's people do not get to skate through life with no problems. Abraham lost Sarah. Isaac lost his sight. He also lost his boys in their fighting and hatred. Jacob experienced one trial after the next. He lost his beloved Rachel as she gave birth. He lost his son Joseph, convinced he died. Joseph's brothers hated him and sold him into slavery. Then, he was falsely accused and thrown in prison. The children of Israel were slaves of the Egyptians. Naomi lost her home to famine, lost her husband and both her sons to death. Hannah could not have children and her husband's other wife mocked her for it. You can not read the Bible and say the people of God will live without trouble. But God's people have hope because we have a Helper who is able to save.

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



It Is Time To Work

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time for the Lord to work.

Matthew Henry said about this passage, "God's time to work is when vice has become most daring and the measure of iniquity is full. Now will I arise, saith the Lord."

Saving, even in Evil Times.

From the human perspective, there is still hope, because the Lord still works. **"Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory"** (Isa. 46:12-13). Perhaps, it is God's will that some will yet be saved. Surely, He Who is the Creator and the Judge and the Saviour, can deal with men as He sees fit! He will work, and He is working amongst men, even now.

Working in Judgment.

When the world has grown too wicked; when the societies of men have declined too far; perhaps, the working of the Lord should be feared at such a time. Perhaps, the work of the Lord will be to pour out judgment upon men. **"Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name"** (Ps. 79:6). **"And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth"** (Rev. 16:1). This time is coming; it is inevitable; and, it may be upon us, even now the coming of the Day of the Lord. Which leads me to my next point.

IT IS TIME FOR US TO WORK

The Lord works through men.

A different way of looking at this verse, is to understand that the Psalmist is speaking of the

Lord working through us. This is still the Lord working, only the Lord working through us. **"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure"** (Phil. 2:13).

John Gill, "The words may be rendered, "it is time to work for the Lord" {o}; so the Septuagint version; to which agrees the Targum, "it is time to do the will of the Lord;" and the Syriac and Arabic versions, "it is time to worship the Lord." It is proper, in declining times, for good men to bestir themselves and be in action, to attempt the revival of religion, to do all that in them lies to support the cause of God, and to vindicate his honour and glory."

The World is wicked; it is time for us to work.

The world is wicked. The Word of God is discarded by men.

Here is motivation for us, from this 119th Psalm, in these wicked days: **"I am small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts"** (Ps. 119:141). Instead of bemoaning the condition of the world; instead of vigorously and pathetically sighing over the evils of today; we should strive to be the ones who set an example, the ones who love and study God's Word, and who live out the precepts and the commandments that are prescribed for us in the everlasting Word of God. **"He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light"** (John 5:35). **"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"** (Ps. 119:105). **"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life"** (Prov. 6:23).

A righteous indignation marks the time for us to work.

It is time for us to work. Where is the outrage that we should be

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It Is Time To Work

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demonstrating? There should be a level of righteous indignation – a holy hatred and anger for sin that should be evident in our teachings and our preaching. **“Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee”** (Ps. 139:21)? The Churches of Jesus Christ should be at the forefront of the defense of the Word of God, and at the forefront of the proclamations for Good and against Evil. **“Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD’S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him”** (Ex. 32:26). Matthew Henry said, “Some read it, and the original will bear it, It is time to work for thee, O Lord! it is time for every one in his place to appear on the Lord’s side--against the threatening growth of profaneness and immorality. We must do what we can for the support of the sinking interests of religion, and, after all, we must beg of God to take the work into His own hands.”

Sorrow for sin marks the time for us to work.

It is time for us to work. It is time for us to demonstrate the sorrow and the grief that we should, because of the sinfulness of men. **“Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law”** (Ps. 119:136). **“I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word”** (Ps. 119:158). **“Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might**

leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD” (Jer. 9:1-3). Our time at the end of the world, is, in many ways, a parallel to the time of Jeremiah at the end of the time of the kingdom of Judah. Wickedness prevails. Judgment looms. It is time for us to work. It is time for us to work through the despair and the sorrow that we feel. It is time for us to stand up against the wickedness, and the doubt, and the fear that prevails in the world.

Compassion for the lost marks the time for us to work.

It is time for us to work. Where is the sympathy and the compassion for the lost, that we should be demonstrating? **“Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes”** (Ps. 119:155). The wicked are far from being saved. Instead, the whole world seems intent on rushing headlong into oblivion. They have forsaken the Word of God—the very Word which is their only hope and salvation. **“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily”** (Col. 1:27-29). In a sense, those of us who have Christ in us are the hope of the world. Not that we are anything in ourselves; but, because we bring Christ to the world of men, through

our witness, our testimony, and through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ in us is our hope, but also the hope of all mankind. We need to live lives that portray Jesus Christ to the world.

The urgency of the last days marks the time for us to work.

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:11-14). We should be busy in the cause of Christ. We should not be lazy, we should not tarry, we must not set aside the task and the duty and the privilege that is granted to us, as the children of God. If Christ is in us, then we should put Him on, daily, as we live in this world. Others should see Christ in us. Others should see evidence of the presence of Christ in our lives.

These are the end times. It is time for us to work. If we do not share the Gospel with the lost, who will? **“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”** (Mark 16:15-16). If we do not proclaim the righteousness of Jesus Christ, as cast upon the backdrop of the sinfulness and the depravity of all men, who will? **“And the gospel must first be published among all nations”** (Mark 13:10). If

we do not proclaim the true, unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ—that is each man’s only hope is to turn from sin unto the Saviour of men—who will? It is time for us to work. Let us be about the business of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. **“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh”** (James 5:7-8).

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



Study of the Bible

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of God would throw a pall of darkness over the universe. But nature can not assure us that God is just.

In order that we may infer, from a man’s actions, that he is perfectly just, all his actions must be conformed to the law of justice. If some of his actions are just and some of them unjust, we can not infer that he is a perfectly just man. If some of his actions appear to be unjust, we can not be certain that he is a perfectly just man.

In like manner, all the indications in nature in regard to the justice of God must point in one direction, or we can not conclude from them that God is perfectly just.

Now what are the indications? They are twofold. There are many examples, in the works of Providence, of the wicked punished and the righteous rewarded. These indicate justice on the part of God. But there are

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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).



HOW DEEP IS THE FATHER'S LOVE?

When I was first called to preach, I was working as a warehouse manager for a furniture company. I could not contain my excitement about the work the Lord was calling me to. It is all I wanted to share, whether people wanted to hear about it or not.

One of my best and favorite workers was a man named Mark. If something came up that needed to be done quickly for a customer concerning a repair or delivery, he was the guy I could count on. It was not uncommon for he and I to spend hours together in a truck doing special deliveries or going the extra mile for a distressed customer. It was on one of these trips that I invited him to come to church with me; he said that the building itself would collapse upon him should he enter our doors due to the wicked things he had done. His response has stuck with me all these years, especially now that I am a pastor.

The reality is that we are all deserving of consequence. Even the most minor sin is repulsive in the eyes of the Lord. Just as a doctor is not for the healthy, the Great Physician's church is not for the perfect. We all fall short. Unchecked and unchastened, our very nature is sin: which is why we need a Savior. Mark is a veteran and a former prisoner of war. He has seen first-hand how vile man can be. He knows

how desperate our wickedness is. Thankfully there is reprieve and everlasting comfort in the arms of Jesus for even the chief of sinners—just ask Paul (I Timothy 1:15).

In Luke 23 we see Jesus being led to His sentencing: His crucifixion. He was scorned by a multitude all along the way. Even as He was being placed upon the cross, the two malefactors (evildoers) were taunting Him. They received their sentence; they were paying the price for crimes they actually committed as they mocked the Son of God. Is that not something? Ridiculing someone as though you were better than them, even though you suffer the same fate.

Eventually the one said to the other **"Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss"** (Luke 23:40-41). Powerful words from one who was as good as dead. He could not improve his state, and he knew it. Look what comes next though in verses 42-43: **"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise."**

Beloved we cannot hold up the walls that might cave in upon us. We cannot remove ourselves from our cross and the consequences of our actions. The

Lord does not require perfection, only repentance and faith. He will in turn guide our steps according to His will.

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



Study of the Bible

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many examples of an opposite character. The wicked are often prosperous even to the close of life. The righteous are often oppressed and afflicted all their days. These facts do not indicate justice on the part of the Governor of the world. If we were left to the light of nature, we would come to no certain conclusion in regard to the justice of God. But the Bible removes the difficulty. It reveals a future world of retribution, in which all men shall be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body. It assures us that God is perfectly just.

In like manner, the indications of nature in regard to the benevolence of God are, taken as a whole, equivocal. Benevolence tends to produce happiness. Some of the arrangements of nature tend to promote happiness and some tend to promote misery. There are the sunshine, the delightful breeze, and the refreshing shower. There are also the storm, the pestilence, and the earthquake. From some of these indications, we should infer benevolence on the part of their Author. From others we should infer malignity. We need light from above to enable us to reconcile all the indications of nature with the benevolence of God. This light the Bible furnishes. It shows us that all suffering is the consequence of sin—the result of a system of justice to be perfected hereafter. It assures us of the infinite benevolence of God.

Nature can give us no assurance that pardon can be had on repentance. The truth that pardon can be had, every member of the human family is interested in knowing. Every one knows that he needs forgiveness; but the Bible alone informs him how it may be obtained.

In nature there are some indications which suggest the possibility of severing the connection between the violation of God's law and the penalty attached to the violation. The transgressor of the law of health, if he reforms and takes remedies in season, may recover from the effect of his transgressions. This suggests that the transgressor of the moral law may, by timely repentance and reformation, escape the penalty. There are other violations of physical law, which are invariably followed by their penalties. Sever the jugular vein and death is certain. No acts of repentance can, in such cases, avert the penalty. May not the same be true of violations of the moral law? There are some indications in nature which suggest the possibility of pardon—there are more which point in the direction of inflexible justice.

We need, therefore, the light of revelation to teach that God is merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sins—that sinners can be forgiven for Christ's sake. **"...even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"** (Eph. 4:32). **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins"** (Eph. 1:7).

Hence the Bible should be studied, because it teaches truths of infinite value which can not be gained from any other source.

The Bible should be studied because it has a tendency to

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develop and purify all our powers. It is a mistake to suppose that it tends to improve our moral powers only. It has a tendency to improve our intellectual and social as well as our moral nature.

All our powers are improved by exercise. The Bible has a tendency to exercise all our powers, and hence to improve them.

The Bible contains a system of truth, just as nature contains a system of truth. It requires careful study to discover it, and that study improves the mind.

The facts from which the science of astronomy is derived appear, at first view, to have very little connection with each other. It took centuries of observation before the system which underlies those facts, and shows that they belong to one harmonious whole, was discovered.

The facts of the Bible, from which the science of theology is derived, seem at first view to have but little connection. They lie scattered, as it were, throughout the Bible. There are facts of history and biography, proverbial maxims, songs of praise, prophecies, and precepts. When carefully studied, a connected system is evolved, and all the various facts of the Bible are found to be parts of one harmonious whole. The study of systematic truth, especially when that truth relates to the highest and most important themes with which the mind can hold converse, must be improving to the mind.

Again, the mind is improved by coming in contact with minds of power. The books which it is most profitable to read are not those which convey the largest amount of information, but those that are infused with power. In reading the work of a superior mind, the mind

of the reader comes in contact with the mind of the writer, and receives a portion of his power.

Now, in studying the Bible the mind comes in contact with the divine mind. If to bring the mind in contact with a powerful human mind be productive of benefit, much more must it be so to bring it in contact with the divine mind! If the benefit of communion with a human mind be in proportion to the power of that mind, how great must be the benefit of communing with the infinite mind!

The object of revelation is to restore the soul to its original perfection. A well-developed intellect is necessary to a perfect soul. Hence the Bible is, as we have seen, adapted to develop the intellect. It is also adapted to develop taste, or the power of perceiving and enjoying beauty. There are, in the Bible, many passages of unequaled beauty and sublimity. It is also adapted to exercise the imagination. Witness the imagery of some of the Hebrew prophets, and especially that of the Apostle John in the Revelation.

It is also adapted to exalt and purify our actions. It makes the exercise of love pervade all our duties. It sets before our affections an object of perfect loveliness in the character of our Heavenly Father. In short, it is perfectly adapted to form wisdom, strength, and beauty of character—to render us perfect men in Christ Jesus. It is, therefore infinitely more worthy of study than any other volume.

The Bible should be studied, not kept as a talisman, nor formally read as a mechanical exercise. It should be studied with reverence, but the same rules of interpretation should be applied to it as to other books. We are to search the Scriptures. To honest

and vigorous exercise of mind there should be added prayer for divine illumination. **“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law”** (Ps. 119:18).

In studying the Bible it is important to notice the relation between its doctrines and its precepts. Some endeavor to separate them, when in truth they are inseparable. Some regard the precepts as having a closer relation to practice, and hence as more important. They do not regard the doctrines of the Bible as having any relation to practice.

The doctrines of the Bible are to its precepts what the principles of arithmetic are to its practical rules. The doctrines are the principles whence the precepts are drawn. We need to understand the doctrines in order to understand the reasons of the precepts.

The study of the Bible should be accompanied with devout meditation. To know what the Bible teaches is one thing; to have its truths influential in directing our actions and molding our characters is another thing. That, truths may be thus influential, the attention of the mind must be long and steadily directed to them. (*The Baptist*, February 8, 1867).



The Sharpest Barb

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would jab at their “traditions” and poke holes in the “sand castles” they had built up to steal God’s glory and turn the attention of the people to their own self-righteousness. But here in our text, we find the “sharpest barb” in our Saviour’s quiver of truth. Selah! Think about it!

Imagine if you were Saul of Tarsus. He was a Pharisee among Pharisees,

was he not? What does that mean? That meant he knew what the Bible said, and he knew the very chapters and verses of Scripture and most were memorized in his head. It is not like he was ignorant of the prophecies of the Old Testament. He knew why the lambs were slain. He knew why it was important to salt the sacrifices; knew why there was a veil in the Temple; knew what the brass, the silver and gold meant in the Temple that they spent all of their time in. But the Pharisees were fulfilling Isaiah 53, were they not? **“For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not”** (Isa. 53:2-3).

How had these keepers of the law and oracles of God gotten to this point of opposing and even despising the very Messiah that God had promised to send? They had left the underscoring power of the Scripture and latched onto the outward, superficial works of their religion. As many lost Levites inherited positions of power and prestige, they could have had no concept of the transforming power of God’s Holy Word, and therefore, they did not reverence it as such. Like modern critical translators, every “jot and tittle” was not important, but only the points they conceived as important were emphasized and the opportunities to enhance their power and hold on the multitudes were all that was important. They would countenance variations (NIV, ESV, etc) and situational ethics. How many directions that error takes

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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).



CHRISTIANS, STAND FIRM!

"But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts" (Jude 1:17-18).

I know it is hard living in a world that is getting worse and worse every day. It is hard to live in a world that hates God more and more every day. The hate of this world is not just against God, it is against Christians and churches alike. Jesus said, **"The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil"** (John 7:7). The world hates us because we are Christians, it hates us that we stand for God's Word and try to do God's works, against abortions, against homosexuals, against sinfulness.

This world is getting eviler by the day, evil has overtaken our education system which are brainwashers with evil and teaching anti-Godism. Our government has been taken over by these same evil people who are as evil as our educational system, and it is not going to get better. Paul wrote to the young preacher Timothy, **"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived"** (II Timothy 3:12-13). If you look closely at this verse you will see the reality of this

verse in America and also in the world. Christians have always lived in persecution since Jesus was here, but look closely at verse 13, **"evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse."** The word "seducer" is defined - a deceiver, imposter - which are liars not only telling lies but believing them. Today you no longer must prove anything, just keep telling the lies and the people will believe it.

Three things control this world, money which is the root of evil, the news media which controls our information, and government which makes the laws. The seducers control all three in this world, and it is getting worse by the day. Jude warned us, **"..there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts."** A "mockers" is defined - a false teacher: - mocker, scoffer - these false teachers, i.e. educators, news media, and etc. will be pushing their own lust and brainwashing people with their own evil lust, and God warned when this happens we are in the **"last days."** John wrote in The Revelations, **"And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived"** (Rev. 18:23).

The "Bridegroom" is Jesus Christ and the Bride is the churches, their voices will not be heard again

even though we keep preaching. People will attempt to eliminate both the Bible and the voice of the churches; Satan will use the voice of the Arminian churches to assist in doing this. They will confuse the world with false teachings to promote humanistic views that eliminate God, Jesus, and grace from salvation, that also works to the elimination of God from people's thinking.

These false prophets will promote humanism over God creating a Godless religion. **"Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen"** (Rom. 1:25). This is the definition of mockers and scoffers. The educators, news medias, and politicians, all fit into this category of mockers and scoffers, all are liars.

Therefore, as we see this world getting worse and worse, we as Christians and churches should not be of great concern because God has ordained it all to be. He warned us that happenings over time would worsen more and more and seeing all these evils should grow our faith in God. We should be rejoicing, not over the persecutions and liars but over seeing God's revelations of the end of our time coming true and closer and closer by the day. Therefore, as we watch the world grow more and more in evil, living in lies, and brainwashing our young it all points to the last days. Therefore, while the pain is great seeing salvations getting far in between, churches getting fewer and fewer, and churches dying off, it is all living in the last days. There was a time when churches and Christians were murdered even by so-called other Christians that were nothing but scoffers and murderers. But

do not forget, God is in control, and God will be victorious in the end. God sets kings up and God takes kings down, to God be the glory. Our suffering will only be a short time, therefore we churches and Christians must stand firm in Christ. Every time a church weakens, or a Christian weakens to the power of this world Satan gets a victory. The Lord warned us, **"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong"** (I Cor. 16:13).

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



The Sharpest Barb

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away from the truth is as myriad as the mutineers. That also was prophesied in that peculiarly Jewish chapter: **"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way..."** (Isa. 53:6). Everyone to **"his own way!"** Soon they had many man-made traditions that had gone generations without anyone to poke a hole in their X-mass party balloons. Selah! Think about it!

The sharpest barb the Man of Sorrows could have posited was **"Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law?"** What? The Law! That is how they constantly attacked the Nazarene, was it not? Their stronghold that this outsider was supposedly chipping away at. "Those are our verses!" they would exclaim! **"They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou"** (John 8:4-5)? **"Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not"** (Matt.

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22:17)? Is it lawful this, lawful that? They thought they were clever and invincible, until Jesus saw through their deceit and burst their bubble, **“...and yet none of you keepeth the law?”**

You see, in their inner heart they knew. They knew the Scriptures fully, and that was the dark, hideous secret in their hearts. It is why their tempers would flare at Nicodemus. **“The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. And every man went unto his own house”** (John 7:46-53). Can you see them stomping out the door, everyone going their own way (Isa. 53:6)? They can not stay together and study it out through the Scriptures, because truly as Jesus said, **“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me”** (John 5:39).

The reason for their illogical refusal to debate the Law with Christ and Christ-followers, was that they knew in their hearts that they were not being honest with anyone, including themselves. The road to error is a slippery slope, and even though the donkeys try to dig in and stubbornly deny and defy the truth, it is still there. Listen to the first fib in the context of our chapter. **“The people answered**

and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee” (John 7:20)? But the public knew, did they not? Five verses later, **“Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ”** (John 7:25-26)? It was the unspeakable elephant in the room. Their greatest, deepest fear was that Jesus WAS the Christ. Our Saviour brought it to the forefront in Caiaphas’ mock trial: **“But neither so did their witness agree together. And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands”** (Mark 14:59-65).

The ultimate testimony against these Pharisees is the bitter and malicious hatred of this country prophet. If there was no truth or credence to His “blasphemous” accreditations, then what would normally have been the reaction? They would have laughed. They would have kicked out any witnesses that tried to build up this Nazarene. But, no! They must DESTROY Him! They must make

sure that no one could ever hear this fellow that was so dangerous to their precarious “untruths.” The One that calmly pointed out their foolishness must not be allowed to live. Their poisons would not work in the face of the truth of Christ and His Father’s Holy Word. Listen to the evidence of that deep-seated fear at the conversion of the chiefest of the persecutors. **“And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks”** (Acts 9:1-5). The pricks of the sharpest barb! Selah! Think about it!

If not a personal danger, why the very personal hatred of those that speak to the core of the truth? Can you imagine a hatred so vitriolic, that one would gnash on another with their teeth? They had to spit upon the Lord and smite Him with their own hands. This is a personal hatred that oozed from the very core of their depraved nature. None must know. **“When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. ...Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s**

feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen...” (Acts 7:54, 57-59).

The sharpest barb, is that which gets to the core of the debate. There is no truth in the modern denial of God, Christianity, and the Holy Bible. It is only logical to have a first cause and intelligent design as the only real architect to the complex designs of nature. No metaphysical possibilities can justify an uncatalogued leap between species. Truly, when every conceivable option has been explored, the impossible must be true to the modern scientist. God is true, and has always been true, but the league of deniers that modern scientists have ascribed to, are sitting on this very vulnerable bubble that they dare not allow anyone to stick a “two-edged sword” into. **“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do”** (Heb. 4:12-13). The very hatred of those that would “kill” God, manifests the truth of their greatest fear. Why get so upset about some looney, country bumpkins, unless there is merit to their assertions of a supernatural creator God?

“Oh, the design of it.” I remember Bro. Bill Stang’s Japanese genetic scientist’s take on the human genome. Take away the blind faith of these modern Pharisees in their “own ways” of preposterous postulations, and the theory of evolution would have been debunked by the facts and actual scientific observations long

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Little Valleys

By Timothy J. Hille of
Ashland, Illinois



"He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills." (Psalms 104:10).

A SURE FOUNDATION

We considered our nation at large in the previous articles. Let us now attempt to narrow the focus somewhat closer to home. **"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do"** (Ps. 11:3)? Many foundations are out of place in our culture and society. The foundation of a sound home from the beginning was one husband and one wife joined by God to love, honor, and serve one another until parted by death. That foundation is all but utterly removed today, and many homes and lives are in tatters as the result. The foundation of the family was a husband who loved his wife and took the lead in teaching his children what is right and true, and a wife who revered her husband and nourished her children by holding them close under her loving and sheltering arms. The cost to individuals and society of the loss of that foundation cannot be measured.

The foundation for a life is the truth, found in the Word of God, the Bible. **"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"** (Matt. 4:4). Today, our society does not regard the Bible as God's Word, but just as one of many books containing moral and religious teachings. School children no longer memorize its wise sayings. Parents and grandparents no longer read it aloud to their children and grandchildren daily. Many preachers and churches no longer preach or practice

its doctrines, substituting instead **"for doctrines the commandments of men,"** (Matt. 15:9). The damage thus caused to the lives of men cannot be calculated. No replacement can be found for these essential foundations.

The only foundation for the salvation of a soul from sin and spiritual death is Jesus Christ and His atoning work at Calvary. **"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"** (I Cor. 3:11). This foundation will support any and all who are built upon it by God's work of grace in them, regardless of nationality, age, ethnicity, education, language, finances, upbringing, or social status. The belief that all beliefs are equal in the sight of God is tantamount to believing that sand is equivalent to bedrock.

A wise engineer or builder uses proven methods and materials. The foundations God has given for the soul, the life, the home, and the family are all proven. You may prove them yourself, by placing your faith in God and His Word. If, in the light of God's Word you find yourself on the wrong foundation, move to the Solid Rock. **"The LORD (Jehovah) is my rock"** (Ps. 18:2). **"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock,"** (Matt. 7:24).

You may be attempting to build your life, home, family, and faith by your own wisdom and power. Only what God builds

will endure. **"Except the LORD (Jehovah) build the house, they labor in vain that build it"** (Ps. 127:1).

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



The Sharpest Barb

(Continued from page 10) ♦

ago. The world-view of atheists have slanted their take on every extraordinarily preserved fossil; every beautiful telescopic photo of far away galaxies; every notation on the biological structure of DNA and the awesome coordination of cellular power plants. They do not see God's creative power; just because they do not want to. They can not, or they are ruined. Watch them black-ball and gnash upon any creation scientist that simply tells the truth of the origin of species.

Not just in science, but also in the fabric of morality, this bubble of psychobabble is dangerously exposed to the truth of God and His Word. What is right? What is righteousness? The world of Humanism is trying to lever Liberalism and Secular Humanism to redefine the civilization of America and the entire globe. When the bubble of political correctness is shown to be constraining healthy dialogue between opposing viewpoints, what do you think will be the reaction of these modern social Pharisees that are trumping up their own "untruths" as inviolable laws and universal mores? When the light of true science shows that life begins at conception, will they deny the obvious truth? Tenaciously so. Can a man change the science of his body and "will" to be female? Only if an entire generation closes their eyes to absolutes and truths that physicists dedicate their lives to.

If we bind up all the abortionists and gay marriage proponents and put them in Massachusetts or California, how many generations could one realistically expect that society of death to last? Only one generation, and the foolishness will be spent. Surely, there are dastardly sins in this world such as lying and theft, but there is a reason that God calls certain sins abomination. The culture of death that results from these "unnatural" sins quickly call upon themselves the judgment of a Holy God. Beware America! Repent, or we will perish as surely as the Sodomites and the Greek Empire.

To protect themselves, these modern pharisees will yet again gnash on the bold executive that gets out the sword of knowledge and wisdom. TDS (Trump Derangement Syndrome) is not anything new, is it. When our zealous president drives furiously into Washington D.C. (like King Jehu of old), everyone in that swamp is terrified that their reign of morbid power might be over and exposed for the lies and fabrications that they are.

It is interesting, the number of folk in the Bible that we can see parallels to in our president. Surely God has given him the strength and also the vulnerabilities of Samson. It is easy to see the nobility and yet the pride and arrogance of Nebuchadnezzar as being similar in these two mighty world rulers. We could write about either of these character contrasts, but I thought that Jehu's story is also being replayed before our 2020 American eyes, as well. Selah! Think about it!

It is not the first time that the swamp has needed drained, beloved reader of the Bible. As Elijah was leaving the scene, God revealed the coming purge of Washington, D.C. (by His grace). **"And Jehu the son**

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Could you please comment on Proverbs 27:17? Is this verse speaking of discussion, debating, or arguing?

Roger Reed
20 Ledgewood Dr.
Mansfield, Ohio 44905

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



There is nothing more joyful than to sit down with a Brother in the Lord and have a good discussion about the Word of God, and as it says there in Proverbs 27:17, it **"sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."**

I believe this verse means to sharpen a friend morally and intellectually because of their friendship. There are many benefits to having these theological discussions. It encourages joy through a stronger mind and improvement of good character which the face reveals. My face lights up and I get excited!

I do not believe in debating or arguing, it seldom, if ever resolves anything. But a good friendly discussion with a friend is a true blessing. I would rather (which I am not fond of) just end a discussion with a "Let us agree, to disagree." There are those who would interpret this verse to justify debating or arguing. Here is what John Gill has said about this verse: **"so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend,"** by conversation with him; thus learned men sharpen one another's minds, and excite each other to learned studies; Christians sharpen one another's graces, or stir up each other to the exercise of them, and the gifts

which are bestowed on them, and to love and to good works. So Jarchi and Gersom understand it of the sharpening of men's minds to the learning of doctrine; but even Ezra, takes it in an ill sense, that as iron strikes iron and sharpens it, so a wrathful man irritates and provokes wrath in another. Some render the words, "as iron delighteth in iron; so a man rejoiceth the countenance of his friend" by his company and conversation."

Again, nothing like discussing Scripture with a friend (brother in Christ). God Bless!

ROGER REED

Matthew Stepp
286 Big Creek Road
Wayne, WV 25570

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



"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (Prov. 27:17). The moral of this story is that **"iron"** bespeaks strength, so a strong friend will make a strong friend even sharper and stronger. But how? Pictured here is an iron axe, hoe, plow, or some other useful iron tool being sharpened by an iron file. It is somewhat incongruous to think so, in the flesh, because one would think that a strong, adamant iron file would damage the fragile, keen edge of our tool. And certainly, applied without wisdom, iron files notwithstanding, if hammered brusquely against that dulled (or

keen) edge would damage and blunt it even more, with visible crimps and burrs. Iron, unlike lesser materials such as feathers or wood, has the capacity to ruin our tools (and friendships), even to the point where it can never be repaired.

I think that the first instruction from this parable is that strong friends have the capacity to impact us much more than mere acquaintances. What a friend says will leave an impression, whether to the sharpening or the blunting, whereas the other folks we hear we will dismiss as "...they do not know what they are talking about." But a strong friend's counsel is weighty and can change us for the better or worse. I hope that the relationship of a strong parent's counsel and upbringing can be seen in bringing up strong children that will love the Lord and serve Him in His churches. Proverbs 23:12-15 says: **"Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge. Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine."**

Back to the picture, if the iron file is used wisely, it can be gently, but firmly scraped against the grain of our tools to remove the excess dross that has accumulated on our tool's cutting edge. As the hoe, axe or plow has been productively used, over time the keen edge is consumed as it cuts weeds, chops wood, plows earth, etc. It must be considered also, that each time the iron file sharpens, more and more of the tool is consumed and it inevitably ages the more. Many times the comfortable grip of a well-used tool and the slant

of constant usage makes it even better than a brand new tool, until it is broken in, by usage and of course the sharpening of iron upon iron. Until we walk a mile in another's shoes, it is virtually impossible to know their pain, growth, or learn their wisdom. If we have no iron friends to sharpen our countenances, we will never be really useful to our Master, as we grow more and more dull and worthless.

How do iron friends sharpen and shape our own iron strength and utility? Arguing and debate usually have the connotations of the hammering blows of the heavy iron file on the tools. It has no profit to the tool, and only little profit in those observing and listening to the heated debates (usually only, in what not to do). **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness"** (II Tim. 2:15-16). But the sharpening quality of discussion and her sister virtue of studying God's Word is indeed what is pictured by the gentle, firm scraping movements of the iron file on the iron tool. It may not be what we want to hear or know, but it is what we need to receive.

One last picture of this iron file, as it is used in our lives. When the Lord saves us and forges a holy tool meet for the Master's use, it is a marvelous sanctification of grace. II Corinthians 5:17 says, **"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."** The Holy Spirit dwells within and we have the perfect holiness of God inside. But, the outer shell of our

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Is I John 4:19 speaking of the election of God?

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

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



"We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19).

The context of First John chapter four contains a treasure trove of truth about spiritual love, which has as its ultimate source the everlasting love of God. There is no doubt that all of God's elect must acknowledge that the ultimate reason why they love God is because God loved them first in the everlasting covenant of grace. Before the world began God the Father loved us with an everlasting love (Jer. 31:3) and chose us in Jesus Christ according to the good pleasure of His will (Eph. 1:4-5). Jesus as God the Son likewise loved us with an everlasting love by agreeing to redeem all that the Father gave Him. He demonstrated that love by way of His miraculous incarnation, where He as God took upon Himself our human nature in a sinless body that was specifically designed to bear the sins of all the elect while He was on the cross (Hebrews 10:5-14). The Father sent the Son into the world on a mission of propitiation and reconciliation (I John 4:9-11). Jesus Christ willingly laid down His life in the stead of all that the Father had given Him before the world began. As the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (I Pet. 1:18-19) Jesus offered

His perfect life and sacrificial blood on the cross of Calvary to put away the sins of His people. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross is the single most magnificent demonstration of love in all of human history. The Holy Spirit also was involved in the everlasting covenant of grace and love, agreeing to regenerate and indwell all that the Father elected and the Son agreed to die for. In God's appointed time the Holy Spirit regenerates God's elect by giving them spiritual life and gifting them with the spiritual graces of repentance and saving faith, wherein He enables them to respond immediately to the Gospel. Thus every aspect of our salvation may be traced back to the eternal love of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. God first loved us. God loved us when we were depraved, ungodly, unholy, and unlovable. God loved us in spite of our rebellion, hatred, and wickedness. It was His love and grace that overwhelmed us and changed our will, our heart, and our mind thus enabling us to love Him for the first time.

Romans 5:5 declares: **"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."** God the Spirit shed abroad the everlasting love of God in our hearts! The Holy Spirit produces the sanctifying fruit of love in our life (Gal. 5:22), enabling us to love God and His people! We love Him because He loved us first! We love Him because His Spirit made us partakers of His love!

We love one another because of God's love working in us. This all genuine, spiritual love may be traced back the eternal Godhead, **"for God is love"** (I John 4:8). Everyone who is born of God will love Him, His commandments, and His people (I John 4:7-19; 5:1-3). As we ponder such majestic truths our hearts should be filled with humility and worship! God Almighty loves us with a love that is as eternal and immutable as He is! Glory to His Name, He also changes us so radically that we go from being His enemies to friends that love Him and delight in His commandments (Rom. 7:22).

TOM ROSS

Matthew Stepp
286 Big Creek Road
Wayne, WV 25570

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



"We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). Yes! Whenever we speak of God's love for us, we must realize that His love is rooted in the beautiful doctrine of unconditional election. Without the choice of God to love unconditionally, there would be no love at all for fallen mankind. Certainly, it is not because any of mankind deserves love, or even seeks to be loved. Psalm 53:2-3 concurs, **"God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."**

I John 4:10 rejoices, **"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."** God loves (personal

pronouns) us/me. God does not love everybody, despite that rampant, heretical teaching of modern Christianity. Psalm 5:4-6 denies that, **"For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man."** God hates "workers" of iniquity, not just the sin, but the sinners, too. The Lord abhors, not just the blood and deceit, but the man that commits such atrocities. The only hope of mankind of escaping the holy wrath of judgment, is that God would choose/elect a people to be "born again" out of this world of sinners. **"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved"** (Eph. 2:3-5). By the grace of His love; the unearned gift of His love to us, first. He transformed us with His great love.

The Word does not declare a universal love, but rather in its great expansive passages of love, points toward the magnanimous gift of a particular and effective love that transforms rebellious sinners into adoring saints. Go to the well of John 3:16, **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."** What

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Forum Question #1

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flesh has not been changed yet, and it tends to dull the usefulness of the tool that we are, with lusts, pride, selfish motives and desires. Progressive sanctification does not actually improve the tool that regeneration forged, and there is no capacity to make us “more holy,” but rather the iron file of God’s Word and worthy friends will “scrape” and “grind” and “file” away the dross of the flesh, so that the pure, holy work of God from the furnace of glory may be more and more clearly seen and used, by His marvelous grace. Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP

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

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



The verse is more far reaching than just discussion or debate with a friend. It has to do with your interactions and relationships with friends, along with the influence you provide one another. The following excerpt from my Plodding Through Proverbs exposition may illustrate what I believe the verse is dealing with:

“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend” (27:17).

My Dad started cutting meat after he quit school at the age of 13. He is, hands down, the best meat cutter I have ever known or worked with. He not only knows how to cut meat, he knows how to cook it, how to display it, how to market it, and how to sell it. Last

year (2017) at the tender age of 79 he finally quit working as a meat cutter for Krogers in Loveland, Ohio in order to take care of my mother who is afflicted with COPD. When I was a teenager I started working for my Dad in an independent meat market near downtown Cincinnati. I have been cutting meat off and on ever since. One of the first things my Dad taught me was how to “steel” a knife in order to keep a sharp edge on it until you could actually use a stone to sharpen it. He taught me how important it was to keep your knife sharp and in working order so you could efficiently cut meat. I learned something far more valuable than the principle of keeping your tools sharp when I worked for and with my Dad. I found out that he was my best friend and that his companionship has had a profound influence on my life. My Dad sharpened my countenance. His friendship has had a profound impact in shaping my life. He taught me how to work, how to interact with people, how to be a responsible man, how to have respect for authority, how to be disciplined and persevering in order to finish a task. My dear old dad and best friend taught me all of these things before I was saved in 1980 at the age of 21. Our friendship has deepened and grown through the years and he continues to sharpen my countenance as he encourages and challenges me. I am forever grateful for such a good friend who is committed to making me a better man, husband, dad, and papaw by his example.

I have been privileged to have so many good Christian friends through the years! It is such a blessing to fellowship with those who share a genuine faith in Christ and a desire to follow Him. What a joy it has been to

be a member of the Lord’s church and earnestly contend for the faith with Christian brothers and sisters who serve to sharpen my countenance and encourage me in the way. How thankful I am for a devoted wife who studies the Word of God with great fervor and speaks to me daily about the truths she has discovered. It is not good for a man to be alone. It is so important to have friends that sharpen your countenance, stimulate your mind, encourage you when you are down, and rebuke you when you are wayward! If you have friends that sharpen your countenance and challenge you to grow spiritually by their words, companionship, and example then you have found priceless jewels. Malachi 3:16-17 describe such jewels: **“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”**

As I pondered this verse it has challenged me to look inward. Am I a friend that sharpens the countenance of my brothers and sisters in Christ? Am I a friend who loves and encourages my wife? Am I a friend that cares enough about my children and grandchildren to provide for them the right example and admonish them to follow Christ with every fiber of their being? Am I a friend to those who are lost, broken, and alienated from God as I once was? Do I care enough about their eternal souls to tell them of the glories of Christ and the saving power of His grace? Oh, that

God may make me a true friend that sharpens the countenance of others!

TOM ROSS



Forum #2

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was the purpose of God? To save the whole world with this gift? Certainly not! The beloved reader can find nothing here, but the clarity that “whosoever believeth” will not perish, and live eternally. Only them! If they do not believe, please read on: John 3:18, **“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”**

So, who will believe? Jesus clearly answers that question in John 10:24-29, **“...How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not... ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life (love); and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”** The Biblical doctrine of election follows this passage. God, the Father (in electing love) gave the Son certain sheep that would hear and follow Him, “believing” the Word of the Gospel. But the remainder “believe not,” because they are not sheep. God knows His own and therefore they believe, as John 3:16 demands and requires. See

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Forum Question #2

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II Timothy 2:19, **"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his,"** and John 6:39-40, **"...the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, ...And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life..."**

The Bible nowhere varies from this ultimate premise **"We love him, because he first loved us."** **"For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you..."** (Deut. 7:6-8). Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP

we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:4-6).

Jesus said, God the Father loved Him before the foundation of the world, and that the Father chose (elected) us **"before the foundation of the world"**, and **"that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."** So, if God chose (elected) us before the foundation of the world, He must have loved us from the beginning. **"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"** (I John 2:15). Before we were saved you and I did not have the love of the Father, because it was not in us to do so until we came to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. God loved us, because you and I were chosen by God in the beginning. You and I just did not know it yet until the Father revealed His son in us. And as Paul put it: **"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me..."** (Gal. 1:15-16).

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth

the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:37-40).

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44).

Jesus never died for every single person as some teach, but He did die for the elect of God (John 6), all the saved, those that God loved before the foundation of the world, those whom Christ shed His blood and died for. Not one drop of blood was shed superfluously, it was only shed for the elect's sake, no one else.

To study this in greater detail go to this website: <http://www.pbcofdecaturalabama.org> and read *Atonement Sufficiency Examined* by the late Elder Oscar B. Mink. Click the link, "Articles & Sermons By O. B. Mink."

When I was saved, I knew God loved me, I just did not know how or why, but I do know now, **"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus"** (Eph. 2:4-7).

I was told by a Baptist preacher once never to use Ephesians 2:5, **"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)..."** when talking to a lost person, because it was a verse the Arminians used to get people saved (can you believe that?). I will not repeat what I told him, but there are no Arminian verses

in the Bible, it is the unadulterated Word of God, and just because the Arminian does not understand the grace of God, I will never cease to preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), and I will use every verse available to present the gospel to the lost!

Without question, I John 4:19 is speaking of the election of God. God Bless!

ROGER REED



The Sharpest Barb

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of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (I Kings 19:16-18). You see, it is not that we have a majority of Republicans, etc. It is that God has a purpose for His 7,000 Israelites and Americans (to glorify His grace and power).

Take the time to read the whole story of Jehu, but I love this next verse that shows President Donald J. Trump arriving in Washington. **"And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, ...and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously"** (II Kings 9:20). Can not slow him down. He is on a mission from the Lord. Vs. 30-33, **"And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. And as Jehu entered in at the gate,**

♦ (Continued on page 16)

Roger Reed
20 Ledgewood Dr.
Mansfield, Ohio 44905

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



It absolutely speaks/teaches election. Look at these verses of Scripture: **"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world"** (John 17:24). **"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that**

The Sharpest Barb

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she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master? And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs (Republicans?). And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. I am squinting to see. Was that the evil Nancy Pelosi or the wicked Hillary Clinton? Drain the swamp! Without a doubt, God is gonna do His will and the sharpest barb will be undiluted truth. Selah! Think about it!

How are we going to get it back to righteousness again? We need to use the sword of the Lord to cut through all of the slimy bubbles, bloated bureaucrats and windbags to set the record straight on what is truth and what is most definitely not. The prophet Isaiah is given an awesome remedy that God is currently applying once again (as the world goes cyclically through these same derangement syndromes). It is not a new-fangled remedy that America needs in our US Senate and House of Representatives. We just need to know what is right and wrong, according to the moral arbiter of the universe, the almighty Holy Ghost. Watch, as I lead the beloved reader through this awesome passage of Old Testament Scripture.

Just reading through the Bible, one can find many practical answers to our "modern" problems of the depravity of man and the governments that we allow to run away from us and turn like the Israelites of old, away from God and toward the bloody governments of Pharaoh's pro-choice political parties. About

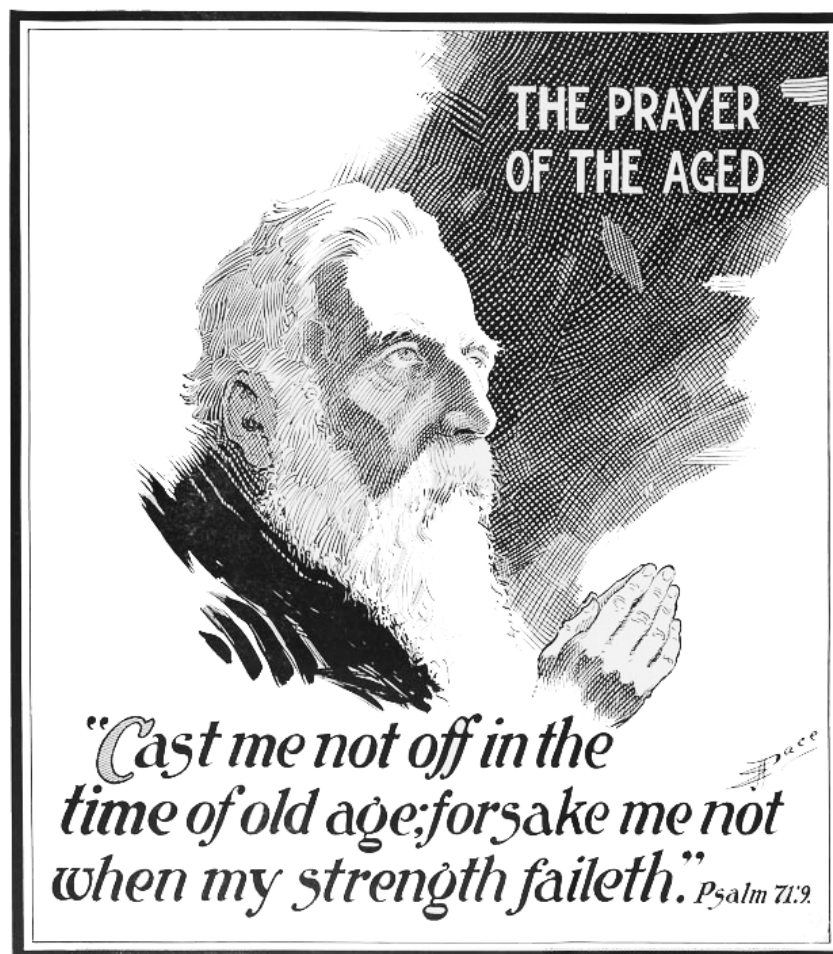
3-4 years ago, how would we have considered going about fixing our beloved America, as the Obamanation had as furiously as Judah's King Manasseh turned our country into a "non-Christian" nation that God would surely have to judge with wrath and holy justice? I, for one, could not see a pathway to righteousness, but my hopelessness was unwarranted, if only I had read the book of Isaiah. God provided the pathway, we just needed a bold executive to enact it. Read the following passage. **"How is the faithful city (America) become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers (abortionists). Thy silver is become dross, (inflation) thy wine mixed with water (recession): Thy princes (politicians) are rebellious, and companions of thieves**

(mainstream media- did we even know how bad it was?): **every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards (dark money): they judge not the fatherless, (abortion, divorce and gay marriage of two moms/dads) neither doth the cause of the widow (plus teen pregnancy) come unto them.** (We have recorded our plight quite thoroughly, have we not? Now see the pathway God is going to use.) **Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be**

redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness. (What did the Democrats use to destroy us? Not essentially either Congress or presidents. They used activist judges to approve abortion and gay marriage. How is God fixing America? In large part He is using President Donald Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to nominate, appoint and restore righteous judges **"as at the first."** From the ground up, what we really need to fix America is righteousness. If our judges return to the rule of the law, then everything else will fall into place and the destruction of Nancy Pelosi and Adam Schiff will be inevitable and almost comedic, as God destroys them with righteousness) **And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed"** (Isa. 1:21-28).

We have the sharpest barb available to fix every problem in our lives, whether political, social, local or personal. It is called the truth! Is sin taking control of your life? Are we deceiving ourselves yet again that we are good Christians? Shine the light of God's Word into our own lives. It will hurt. The primal flesh will snarl and fight like demonic forces do, whenever they are exposed. The bitterest battles will be those in our own hearts, but the giants need to be faced. May we be found faithful in exposing the ballooning lies and distended bowels of festering depravity in our lives, families, churches and nation. The Great Physician will be there to lead and guide us into healthy and righteous service. Selah! Think about it!

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



An Exposition of Job 19:25

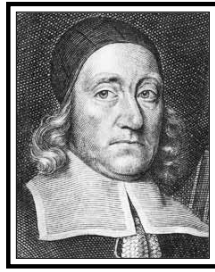
Part Four

By Joseph Caryl
(1602 - 1673)

First, Thus.

“Our bodies shall be raised out of the dust in the latter day by the power of Christ.”

Man is a creature consisting of visible and invisible, of mortal and immortal, a soul and a body. His mortal and visible part of the body fell under the arrest of death, as soon as he was tainted with sin, and by the decree of God it is appointed unto all men once to die; yet man shall not always abide in this death, which is the separation of the soul from the body. These shall meet again and be reunited, death itself is under the dominion of Christ the Lord of life; the keys of the grave are committed unto Him. We read of a twofold resurrection from a twofold death, both effected by His power. (Job 5:25, 28, 29) **“... the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live....”** All men are naturally dead in sin, as soon as they live in nature. And as soon as any of these dead hear the voice of Christ speaking by the Word and Spirit, they live in grace. This is called a “new birth” a new “life,” as also a “resurrection.” The hour or season of this spiritual resurrection (faith in Christ) **“... is coming and now is...”** (verse 25). But at the 28th and 29th verses, he speaks of a resurrection which was coming, but then was not. **“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they**



that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

There are but some who attain the spiritual resurrection, but all shall attain the corporal: All that are in the graves (whether buried in the sea, or upon the dry land) shall come forth, even they who shut their ears against His voice, calling them out of their sins, preaching peace, and tendering them eternal salvation, shall hear His voice calling them out of their graves, and summoning them to the judgment of their eternal condemnation. As Pharaoh lifted up the head of both his great officers; the chief butler and the chief baker, were both brought out of the prison, but the one he restored to his office, and the other he hanged up. Thus in proportion will it be in the day when Christ lifts up the heads of all the prisoners of death out of the grave. Christ is so much in the resurrection, that He calls Himself the Resurrection. When He was going to the grave of Lazarus, He saith to Martha, “thy brother shall live again” (John 11:25). She answered, **“I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”** Her faith was clear for the resurrection, and she expressed the time (as Job in the text) **“at the last day.”** Christ approved her confession, yet gives her further instruction (verse 25), **“I am the resurrection, and the life....”** And so He is, not formally, but causally or virtually, that is, He is the Author of the resurrection, and that in reference

to both natures; First, His Divine nature is the efficient cause of the resurrection. He shall raise our bodies out of the dust, and the dust shall give up its prisoners, by the power of His Godhead; Secondly, His human nature is the exemplary cause or pattern of the resurrection; upon which ground the Apostle calls Christ **“the firstborn from the dead”** (Col. 1:18). For though some were raised from the dead before Him, yet seeing His resurrection was the cause of their resurrection, and will be the cause of theirs who have been raised, who shall be raised, therefore He is called the **“the firstborn from the dead.”** Hence the Apostle argues the opposers of the resurrection in the Church of Corinth (I Cor. 15:12) **“Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?”** As if he had said, Do but grant this that the body of Christ is risen, and you cannot rationally deny a resurrection of our bodies, both because His resurrection is the example of ours, and because Christ and all believers are one mystical body, He is the head and we the members; nor indeed is Christ perfectly risen, till we all rise. for though Christ’s personal resurrection was perfect when He arose, and though all believers arose representatively when Christ arose, yet till all believers arise personally, the resurrection of Christ hath not received its utmost perfection. For as though the personal sufferings and afflictions of Christ in the flesh were perfect, yet till all His members have suffered in the flesh, that which God hath appointed as their portion in sufferings: There is somewhat **“behind** (as the Apostle speaks, Col. 1:24) **of the afflictions of**

Christ” which Paul for his part rejoiced to fill up; so we may say, that till all believers arise in the flesh, or body, there is somewhat behind of the resurrection of Christ.

We may further take notice from the 16th, 17th, and 18th verses of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, Chap. 15, how the Apostle turns this argument. As before he said, “If Christ be risen, how do some say, that there is no resurrection of the dead;” so here on the other side, If “the dead rise not, Christ is not risen, and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins, and they that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” From all he concludes in the 20-22nd verses, **“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”** There are two roots out of which life and death spring. Death springs from Adam, life from Christ; And as by Adam all die, which are Adam’s seed, or his sons, (as all men naturally are) so by Christ all who are His seed and children, and so only the elect and faithful are, shall be made alive. But then it may be questioned, Shall not all men, even all the sons of Adam be made alive by the resurrection of their bodies, which is the general subject of that chapter? I answer, they shall. Hence Christ speaks distributively, of them that shall rise, as was showed but now, (John 5:29) **“...they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”** But shall not the wicked be raised also by Christ?

◇ (Continued on page 18)

Job 19:25

(Continued from page 17) ♦

The 28th verse answers; **"...all that are in the graves shall hear his voice."** Christ shall raise all, yet with a difference; The wicked shall be raised by virtue of that power or dominion which He hath over all flesh (John 17:2). But the Godly are raised up by virtue of that union which Christ hath with their Spirits, yea with their persons.

Secondly, Consider the words as holding out that which follows the resurrection, "Judgment"; Job is conceived (in reference to his own present condition) as having a special eye at that; for he was hardly judged in those days, and therefore might comfort himself in this hope, that the case should be judged over again at the latter day. As if he had said; "Though I am severely treated by you and cannot have right judgment here on earth, yet the time will come when I shall surely have it; My Redeemer shall stand at the latter day upon earth, to minister judgment unto all, and to me among the rest."

From this application of the text, First, Observe;

"That there shall be a general judgment, hath been known and believed in all ages."


While Solomon seems to let the young man look at his pleasures he presently gives him a check or cooler upon this account (Eccl. 11:9) **"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; ...but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."** The preacher concludes his sermon with this point; "God shall bring every work to judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good or evil." The Apostle Jude speaking of the fallen angels, assures us at the 6th verse that, "...

the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." In the 14th and 15th verses, he shows how early this doctrine of a Judgment was in the Church of God; **"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints. To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."** Enoch lived long before Job, yet in his time this was a famous well known point of faith; And we find that in the apostles time, it grew into the number of sacred Proverbs, which are all famous, and commonly known. (I Cor. 16:22) **"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha"**, that is, let him be accursed till the day of Judgment, or till the Lord come to Judgment. The Apostle used two words, to note both the vehemence of his own spirit in speaking, and the certainty of the thing spoken; and he gives the curse in two languages (Greek and Syriack, which latter is a daughter of the Hebrew) both to show that men of all nations and languages, who love not Christ, are under a curse; and that they are deservedly cursed among all nations. The Greek word used by the Apostle, "Anathema," signifies execrable. the Syriack word "Maranatha," is a compound of, "Maran Lord," and "Atha He cometh." This was used in the most dreadful sentence of excommunication; as if they had cited the person to the tribunal of Christ at His

coming to judge the world, or left him bound under the curse of that sentence until the coming of Christ. So that "Maranatha," signifying the "Lord shall come," was a proverbial speech, implying a day of judgment coming. And as Scripture authorities are full of it, so there are many rational demonstrations of it: For first, The judgments which have been, show that there shall be a judgment; Christ hath often, as it were, stood on the ground already in judgment both against persons and nations; These lesser days of Judgment, are a strong argument of a great day of Judgment. Secondly, As lesser external Judgment-days argue it, so do internal Judgment-days. There is a day of Judgment kept in the conscience of man, which tells us that God will keep a day of Judgment at last concerning all men. If we were not to be judged, we should never judge our selves, nor be troubled at what we have

done, were we not to answer for what we have done. The Apostle is clear in it (Rom. 2:15) speaking of the Gentiles who had not the Law published to their ear, yet (saith he) **"Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another."** This mean while, is, till the Judgment come; As if he had thus expressed himself; Before the great Judgment comes they judge themselves; or their thoughts betwixt themselves are arraigning and impleading them, or apologizing for and acquitting them. The reason of this internal antecedent session is, because "as many as have sinned in the Law, shall be judged by the Law, (ver. 12) (13-15 verses, are but a parenthesis) **"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according**

♦ (Continued on page 19)



BIBLE CONUNDRUMS

(August)

Who gleaned in the field of Boaz?
 Who was the son of Barachel?
 Who was the son of Pethuel?
 Who hid a hundred prophets in a cave?
 Who of Bethlehem Judged Israel?
 Who was a devout man?
 One of the sons of Aaron.

What prophet came to Damascus?
 A queen who made a feast for women.
 Who was the father of Methuselah?
 Who was the father of Hobab?
 Who was the son of Imlah?
 One of the sons of Simeon.
 Who was the eldest son of Israel?
 Who was the father of Hoshea?

Now search your Bible, that will tell what words
 all these initials spell.

Job 19:25

(Continued from page 18) ♦

to my gospel." In this mean while or in this interim till the day that God shall judge the thoughts of men by Jesus Christ, men's thoughts fall at judging themselves. Conscience is the correspondence of the spirit of man with the law of God in binding or loosing, in condemning, or absolving. And though some men's consciences are so dark, blind, and ignorant, that they do not judge themselves at all, and the consciences of others are so bribed and biased, so ill informed and erroneous, that they give a false judgment, and justify those whom God and His Law condemn, yet that there is such a work of conscience (whether it be true or false, right or wrong, alters not the case) all (who know any thing of its working) do agree; And this is an evidence and convincing

demonstration, that there shall be a judgment: conscience is God's Depenty, and doth but begin what Christ in the Great audit-day, or day of reckoning, will complete and finish. The Apostle indeed assures us, that **"...if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged"** (I Cor. 11:31). Yet in this he doth not exempt either good or bad who judge themselves from appearing in the great day of Judgment, but only directs the good (for he speaks there to saints in fellowship) how to prevent the Lord's adjudging them to present chastenings and afflictions, as is clear from the 32nd verse; **"But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."** Holy self-judging and examination may prevent present judgment, but every self judging is an evidence, yea, an assurance of the future judgment.

Thirdly, Judgment hath not been fully executed in any age of the world, and yet then it was not a full execution of judgment, there was a wicked one not judged, there was an accursed Ham in the ark spared from judgment, while the rest of mankind was drowned and overwhelmed with water. And though God hath written wrath and judgment upon thousands of wicked men in red letters, even in their own blood, yet there are many whose paths swim with butter, and the rock pours out rivers of oil unto them, many upon whose heads the candle of outward prosperity

shines, while their heads and hearts and hands are full of wickedness; judgment is so far from being fully executed in this world, that many are hardened in sin, and some so stumbled or offended in the ways of holiness, that they are ready to say, "Where is the God of judgment?" And hence it is that the Apostle (Rom. 2:5) calls the last Judgment, the "day of the declaration of the righteous judgment of God"; the judgment of God is righteous now, but it is not revealed, and it is not manifested, therefore a time shall come, when there shall be a revelation of His righteous judgment fully; The same Apostle gives a fourth reason (which comes near the case of Job) why there must be a day of judgment. Job's good name was under a cloud, his credit was exceedingly eclipsed, and he was misjudged by his friends (as many sincere ones have since been) an hypocrite; now as the Lord will have a time to acquit Himself, and to declare the righteousness of His judgment, so He will have a time to quit the integrity of His people, and to set them right in the eye of all the world. In that day as He will destroy the vales of misreport which have been cast upon His ways, and the vales of error which have been cast upon His Word, so also He will destroy all the vales of reproach and slander which have been cast upon the persons, speeches, or endeavors of His people. He will have a day in which there shall be a fresh edition of the workers of all His saints, with the comment of their own upright and honest meaning upon them, not racket and wier-drawn with the malice and misconception, either in enemies or mistaken friends. This is the ground of that serious and but needful caution given by the Apostle (I Cor. 4:5)

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." What every man? Will God praise those who are praise-less? Will He praise the proud and covetous, the drunkards, and unclean? Shall every man have praise of God? Will He flatter men in their sin, and sew pillows of commendation under every elbow? No, the Apostle's meaning is, every man that is praise-worthy, shall have praise of God; and good and faithful man, every true believer; all sincere and honest hearts, though they have been called hypocrite, and disgraced, though they have had the dirt of a thousand scandals, cast in their faces, yet there is a day coming, when as all tears, so all reproaches shall be wiped away, and every man, that is, every godly man shall have praise of God. Job who was called hypocrite, and wicked, shall then again have praise of God, his old certificate or letters of commendation shall be renewed; "A man perfect and upright, fearing God and eschewing evil."

Seeing this Day of Judgment hath been so long ago spoken of, and believed; seeing there are such undeniable proofs and demonstrations of it; we have cause to be ashamed that we have not more quick thoughts, more lively and working apprehensions of it, that we are not more acquainted with it. One of the Ancients saith of himself, that wheresoever he went, whether he did eat or drink, or travel, or study, or whatsoever he was about, he thought he heard the voice sounding in his ears, "Arise ye dead, and come to judgment";

♦ (Continued on page 20)

ANSWER TO BIBLE CONUNDRUMS

(July)

"I am the true vine" (John 15:1).

I	shmael.....	Genesis 21:20
A	ndrew.....	Matthew 10:2
M	izzah.....	Chronicles 1:37
T	imotheus.....	Acts 16:1
H	oreb.....	Exodus 3:1
E	phesus.....	Revelation 1:11
T	imna.....	I Chronicles 1:39
R	euben.....	Genesis 37:21
U	zziah.....	II Chronicles 26:1
E	unice.....	II Timothy 1:5
V	inegar.....	Matthew 27:34
I	sraelites.....	Deuteronomy 8:2
N	aaman.....	II Kings 5:1
E	lisha.....	II Kings 2:23

Job 19:25

(Continued from page 19) ♦

it is good for us to carry this day in our thoughts all our days. If we do so, we shall find these two profitable effects of it.

First, It will awaken us; Secondly, It will meeken us.

First, It will awaken us, and keep us awake; The sound of this Judgment made Felix tremble; He that trembles is awakened; and it will keep us awake while we remember that it shall come unexpectedly, suddenly; it hath been long in coming, but when ever it comes, it shall come suddenly. So the Apostle describes the coming of that day (I Thes. 5:2) "It shall come as a thief"; a thief comes suddenly. Christ describes it by that which is more sudden (Luke 21:35) "It shall come as a snare"; how suddenly doth a snare take the bird? That the Judgment shall be so terrible and dreadful should awaken us, that it shall be so sudden and unavoidable, should keep us awake.

Secondly; It should meeken us. Why should we judge others, seeing we must all be judged? See how the Apostle takes them up, or rather takes them down, who erected tribunals, and stood on the earth as Judges over their brethren, (Rom. 14:4) "**Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?**" Proud censoring persons know not themselves, nor doth any man know what they judge themselves to be, who are over-busy in judging others. When we in common speech say to a man, "Who art thou?" We argue our own ignorance or nescience of his person. But in speeches of this style, when we say, "Who art thou?" We either argue the pride of that person whom we already know, or that he doth not know his place and duty,

but over weans himself, and takes upon him beyond his line, which no man doth more than he who takes upon him to judge another man's servant, excepting him only who takes upon him to judge the servants of God. And while the Apostle saith, "Why doest thou judge another man's servant," he doth but more convince (by that common rule) such as presume to judge the special servants of God. As thus he reproves all peremptory judging of others because they are servants to another, so he proceeds to a further reproof of it, because they are our brethren (v. 10) "**But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.**" But may we not at all judge one another; must all judgment be deferred till Christ come to judge us all? This the Apostle seems to give in charge, (I Cor. 4:5) "**Therefore judge nothing before the time....**" What is the time? We have an answer in the next words; "**until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness.**" What coming is this? None other surely, but His coming or His glorious appearance, when we must appear before His Judgment-seat, to receive according to what we have done in the flesh, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Yet this is not a total prohibition of judgment, as some pervert that place, urging it against all magistrate, as if it were unlawful for a man to be a judge. The Scripture forbids only incompetent judges, or the unjust judgment of such as are competent. It forbids only rash judgment about things or persons without proof, or a judgment upon persons about such things, of which there can be no proof; "The hidden things of darkness,

and the counsels of the heart," which Christ alone can bring to light and make manifest, as that text expounds itself; Or the Scripture forbids rigid and final judgment concerning the eternal state of any person. For though we may say of many men, considering their actions and outward course, as also the appearing frame and disposition of their spirits, that they are in a damnable and perishing condition; yet we cannot pronounce a final sentence upon any man that he shall be damned, because every man's judgment is of God; and they who are now abominable and disobedient and unto every good work reprobate, may yet (through free grace) be converted and healed, made clean and justified.

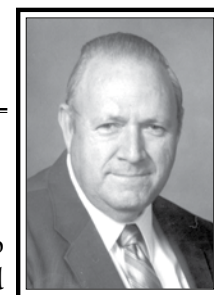
Lastly, The Scripture forbids us to judge one another, as having no grace for the doing or not doing of those things, which may consist

with a present state of grace. So the Apostle argues (Rom. 14:3) in his dispute about the ceremonial observation of meats, and days, concerning whose abolition by Christ, many believers were then unsatisfied; "**Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him**" that is, he hath accepted, and numbered him among his own; therefore do not thou severely reject and cast him out. And as thus many cases we ought not to judge our brethren at all, so in all cases we ought to judge them with tenderness and meekness, with a kind of trembling and unwillingness, because there is a Judgment to which we also must come to give an account, as of all our ways, so of the Judgment which we at any time pass upon our brethren.



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Joyful Sound

"**Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance**" (Ps. 89:15).

The sounding of the silver trumpet among the Israelites was a common thing. It was sounded for their journeys, or gatherings for assemblies, or at the time of battle, or of solemn feasts (Num. 10:2,9; Lev. 25:9; Ps. 81:3). The joyful sound of the trumpet was heard at the great festivals such as the feasts of trumpets (Lev. 23:24). It was especially a joyful sound after the yearly atonement on the day of jubilee, proclaiming

liberty to bondmen and restoration of their inheritance to them that had forfeited it (Lev. 25:8-10). The joyful sound came after the atonement. Likewise the gospel is not a joyful sound till we know Christ as our atonement.

THE GOSPEL A JOYFUL SOUND

Being a musician, the psalmist was familiar with sounds. He knew that not all sounds were joyful sounds. There was a trumpet sounded for war. But

♦ (Continued on page 22)

Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of
Plant City, Florida



SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON - BIBLE SURVEY #16 NOAH

TEXT: Gen. 6:1-22

DEVOTIONAL READING: Heb. 11:7; II Peter 2:5

AIM: An over-view of the life of Noah

SUGGESTED HYMN: ONE DOOR

INTRODUCTION: We now look at Noah, the preacher of righteousness.

I. THE TIME OF NOAH: Gen. 6:1-7—There is a false notion that Noah was a good man. He was not. The Bible describes to us the sinful condition of society during the days of Noah.

1. Intermarriages: Gen. 6:1-2—When sons of God (those who were saved) married daughters of men (lost people) it led to a departing from the Word of God.

2. Depravity Manifested: At this time, people manifested their sinful condition to the fullest. The Holy Scriptures describes it, **“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination (purposes and desires) of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”** Gen. 6:5 (Cp. Rom. 3:9-20, 23). Noah was as vile as everyone else. Guilty and wretched; worthy of being destroyed (vv. 7).

II. NOAH SAVED BY GRACE: Gen. 6:8-9—We must take note of the order of these verses. Noah was not saved by grace because he was a just man and perfect in his generations and walked with God; but rather He was a just man, perfect, and walked with God because He was saved by grace.

1. Found grace In The Eyes of the Lord: Sin had reached a climax, but grace super abounded (Rom. 5:20). Grace is first mentioned here! Grace=kindness or favor. God showed kindness or favor unto Noah that Noah did not deserve. Noah was as guilty as the rest, but the Lord was full of pity and mercy toward Noah and saved Him.

Such is still true today. That sinners are not worthy to be saved, but it is God that does it all out of grace (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7).

III. A JUST MAN: Gen. 6:9—By God's grace, Noah became a just man. The word “just”= “righteous” in the eyes of the Lord. God had pronounced Noah to be just/righteous. No longer was Noah an unrighteous man (I Cor. 6:9). By God's grace Noah was made right with God.

1. How Can Man Be Right With God: Job 9:1-4—Man has wronged God. God requires complete obedience to His Word/Law. In Adam, we disobeyed the Lord. In our lives we have also disobeyed the Lord. There is but one way to be **“right with God”**—Gal. 2:16, **“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ...”**

IV. WALKED WITH GOD: Gen. 6:9—Enoch and Noah both walked with God (Gen. 5:24). This means that their lives were pleasing unto

the Lord (Heb. 11:5,6). Noah is called a **“preacher of righteousness”** (II Peter 2:5). Everyone who has been born-again, redeemed, found grace in the eyes of the Lord ought to be declaring the righteousness of God to them that are lost. This will be well pleasing to God.

1. The Bible Order: We must remember that this is the Bible order. First, the sinner finds grace in the Eyes of the Lord and is made just. Then they walk, or have a life that is well-pleasing unto the Lord. Many are trying to live a life that is morally acceptable, yet they have neglected the righteousness of God which can only be found by faith in Jesus Christ.

V. NOAH OBEYING GOD: Gen. 6:14-22—We are told that **“Noah walked with God.”** This we know means that His life pleased the Lord. God gave Noah 3 commands. Noah obeyed them by faith (Heb. 11:7).

1. Commanded to Build the Ark: Gen. 6:14, 22—We are told that God warned Noah of **“things not seen as yet”** (Heb. 11:7). It had never rained, nor flooded, yet Noah took God at His word. He believed what God said. And, **“Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he”** (Gen. 6:22). Noah did not attempt to improve or change God's design of the ark, nor the materials. We must be careful, to do it the way of the Lord (Deut. 4:2; 12:32).

2. Commanded to enter the Ark: Gen. 7:1—Noah was commanded to come into the Ark. In the ark, all who entered would be saved. Again we read of Noah's obedience to the Lord's command—**“And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him,” “And Noah went in...”** (Gen. 7:5, 7). We find that the LORD shut Noah and the inhabitants in the Ark (Gen. 7:16). There is safety and security in obeying the Lord.

A. God has commanded all men everywhere to repent—Acts. 17:30-31; Have you?

3. Commanded to Exit the Ark: Gen. 8:15-18—Just as Noah went in, so he went out—at the command of the LORD. It was at this time that the Lord blessed Noah (Gen. 9:1). We must understand that it is in obeying the Lord that we will find God's blessings and His promises kept.

VI. NOAH AND THE END-TIMES: Matt. 24:37-39—The Lord taught that He would come again in similar times as that of Noah. Beloved, we are in those times. Folks are extremely wicked. And there be few who walk with God.

Oh, that you might find grace in the eyes of the Lord, calling upon the Name of Jesus that you might be saved—and walk with God, submitting to scriptural baptism and becoming a member of the Lord's church, serving Him faithfully in accordance with the Word of the Lord. AMEN!

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



The Joyful Sound

(Continued from page 20) ♦

he knew the joyful sound of the jubilee trumpet which came after the great Day of Atonement. Even so born-again believers know the joyful sound of the blood atonement of Jesus Christ.

The proclamation of the gospel after Christ's blood atonement is a joyful sound to a sinner quickened by the Holy Spirit. It is **"glad tidings of good things"** (Rom. 10:15) and **"good news"** from the far country of Heaven (Prov. 25:25). It presents the chiefest Savior for the chiefest of sinners. There are no tidings so joyful as the announcement of free and full salvation through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ for lost and ruined sinners. There is no discord in this sound, for it is a soul-cheering sound.

Isaac Watts expressed it in 1709 by saying:

Salvation! oh, the joyful sound!

'Tis pleasure to our ears,

A sovereign balm for every wound,

A cordial for our fears.

There may be an allusion in my text to the shout of victory when an army has conquered its foes. Such is the sound of the gospel. The gospel declares Jesus Christ to be the mighty Conqueror Who cried: **"It is finished"** (John 19:30). He met the world on the battlefield and proclaimed: **"I have overcome the world"** (John 16:33). He fought with Satan and his angels at Calvary and triumphed over them by His cross (Col. 2:15). By His death Christ conquered death and said: **"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death"** (Rev. 1:18). The gospel is the good news that believing sinners have entered into Christ's victory,

that every enemy is destroyed, and that we are **"more than conquerors through him"** (Rom. 8:37).

WHY A JOYFUL SOUND?

The gospel is a joyful sound for a number of reasons. First, it is a joyful sound because it is just what the sinner needs. It is food for the hungry soul. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit a sinner becomes a **"hungry soul"** (Ps. 107:9) which hungers **"after righteousness"** (Matt. 5:6). The gospel is a joyful sound to such a sinner because it fills **"the hungry soul with goodness"** (Ps. 107:9). The gospel presents Christ as **"the living bread"** which if any man eats **"he shall live for ever"** (John 6:51).

The gospel restores health to the sin-sick soul. The unsaved have a fatal disease called sin. **"For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines"** (Jer. 30:12-13). Under Holy Spirit conviction the sinner is made to cry out: **"... heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee"** (Ps. 41:4). In the gospel the great Physician says to such a sinner: **"I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds"** (Jer. 30:17). How joyful is the sound to a sin-sick soul that Christ was sent into the world to **"heal the broken-hearted"** (Luke 4:18). How happy he is to discover that by **"his stripes we are healed"** (Isa. 53:5).

Second, the gospel is a joyful sound because it is truth in the midst of a world of falsehood and deception. Most preachers today preach another gospel and another Jesus. Religious lies are a dime a dozen. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the true sayings of God,

the Scripture of truth. Ephesians 1:13 speaks of **"the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation."** How thrilling for a sinner to hear a clear and loud sound of salvation by Christ Who is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). Those who receive the gospel see Christ as **"the true Light"** (John 1:9), **"the true bread"** (John 6:32) and **"the true God, and eternal life"** (I John 5:20).

Third, the gospel is a joyful sound of forgiveness to the unforgiven. Man is a sinner before a holy God and needs forgiveness. Without it he is judgment-bound and Hell-bound. The gospel declares that **"All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men"** (Matt. 12:31). It proclaims **"that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins"** (Mark 2:10). It says **"that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins"** (Acts 13:38). Forgiveness of sin is only through the blood atonement of Jesus Christ (Luke 24:47; Eph. 1:7). What a soul-cheering message it is that a complete atonement has been made for our sins and a full, free pardon is granted to every believing soul!

Fourth, the gospel is a joyful sound of freedom to slaves. Men by nature are bond slaves of sin and Satan. The Bible describes them as **"servants of sin"** (Rom. 6:17). Jesus Christ said: **"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin"** (John 8:34). The gospel announces **"deliverance to the captives"** (Luke 4:18). It says: **"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"** (John 8:36). How wonderful for slaves of sin and Satan to be told: **"Christ hath made"** you free at last (Gal. 5:1). Oh, to be **"the Lord's freeman"** (I Cor. 7:22).

Fifth, the gospel is a joyful sound of peace to those at war with

God. Because of sin there is a war between God and man. By nature man is **"the enemy of God"** (Jas. 4:4) and **"enmity against God"** (Rom. 8:7). He is a warring rebel against the unconquerable King of kings. Because of his rebellion he is condemned to be burnt alive in Hell-fire. The gospel tells such a man that true and everlasting peace has been made by the cross of Christ. This good news calms his fears and gives him Heaven on earth. It bestows upon him peace which goes into the depth of conscience and will remain when he rises to judgment on the great day. Neither friends or foes can take this joy and peace away from him.

A JOYFUL SOUND TO THOSE WHO KNOW IT

Note carefully the words of the text: **"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound. . ."** The blessing is not in hearing the sound, but in knowing it (II Cor. 4:3-4). Thousands hear the sound of it, but not one in a hundred know it. The sheep of Christ alone can distinguish it from all other sounds: **"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers"** (John 10:4-5). The sheep of Christ know the gospel by the power with which it comes to their souls and because it points them to the Good Shepherd.

Believers know it spiritually and experimentally. They have been effectually called by it (II Thess. 2:14), for it came to them **"in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance"** (I Thess. 1:5). They believe it, approve of it, delight in it, love it, and obey it. They will drive a long way to hear

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The Joyful Sound

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it preached.

Those who know the gospel are a happy people because they feel peace and pardon in their conscience. Psalm 51:12 speaks of **“the joy of thy salvation.”** In Isaiah 12:3 it is written: **“Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.”** We are told in Luke 19:6 that Zacchaeus received Christ **“joyfully.”** When the Ethiopian eunuch was saved and baptized **“he went on his way rejoicing”** (Acts 8:39). In I Peter 1:8 we read of some believing on Christ who **“rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”**

Philip Doddridge put it so well in his beloved hymn:

*O happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Savior and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away;
He taught me how to watch and pray,
And live rejoicing every day:
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away.*

The very first effect of believing the gospel is joy. The happiest day of my life was when I believed the good news of how Christ died a substitutionary death for sinners and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. As the years have gone by I have discovered many other doctrines of the gospel. All of these have made me a happier man on earth. Take away the gospel and you take away my spring of spiritual happiness.

What if the Arminians are right and a man has to be saved by his good works? How could a man ever know he had done enough good works to earn Heaven? What if he worked and walked faithfully for a lifetime, and got tired, and quit at the

eleventh hour? Would he miss Heaven because he was a bit short on good works? Such a teaching would drive a man to despair and rob him of all hope of salvation in this world. The message that a man must do enough good works to earn Heaven is not good news. It is bad news, for no mortal could ever do enough good works to enter Heaven. To tell a man he is partly saved by Christ and partly saved by himself is to put one foot on the rock and another on the sand!

Beware of those who preach another gospel! Be on guard against any message that preaches forgiveness of sin except by the blood of the cross of Jesus Christ. Watch out for them who deny Christ bore the wrath of God for the sins of His people that we might have an everlasting salvation. Any interference with the purity of the gospel is an interference not only with the absolute safety, but the happiness of the people of God!

Heaven be praised for the joyful sound of the gospel of God's saving grace. This cheering sound lightens the toils of the road, sweetens our trials, and lessens life's long afflictions. Hush this sound and you rob the world of its heavenly music. You leave poor sinners nothing but death and damnation, for the gospel is the proclamation of the covenant of grace.

THE GOSPEL MAKES MEN HOLY

The first effect of the gospel is to make men happy; the second effect is that it makes them holy. Men are sadly mistaken when they accuse those of us who believe in sovereign grace of preaching that men have a license to sin. We do not believe nor teach that men saved by the gospel of God's grace are lazy and inactive in their duty

to God.

Please notice that my text says: **“Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: THEY SHALL WALK, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance”** (Emp. MRC). It does not say, “They shall sit down,” or “they shall lie down,” or “they shall fall down.” It says: **“They shall walk”!** What is walking? It is a progressive motion from one place to another. The believer has a continuous, progressive motion from sin to holiness, from dead works to good works.

Those who receive the gospel are given spiritual feet to walk: **“I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them”** (Ezek. 36:27). Those made alive by the Holy Spirit have spiritual life put in them, and they **“walk in newness of life”** (Rom. 6:4). The influence of the Holy Spirit and the love of Christ constrains them to be obedient to their Savior. The divine nature inside of them causes a change on the outside so that their life **“becometh the gospel of Christ”** (Phil. 1:27).

The Lord's sheep have ears and feet: **“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me”** (John 10:27). Goats and false professors do not persevere in a life of holiness and righteousness all the days of their life, but the Lord's sheep do. They will follow in holy obedience His commandments. They will follow on to know Him better. They will follow Christ's example of holiness, love, self-denial, and meekness. Those who do not do these things are Satan's goats!

THOSE WHO SO WALK ARE BLESSED

My text concludes with the words: **“ . . . they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy**

♦ (Continued on page 24)

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

6-1-2020 to 6-30-2020

Beginning Balance	\$2,008.34
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	300.00
Carol Willett, Cottonwood Shores, TX	75.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Gladwin, MI	50.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC	50.00
Grace Missionary B. C. Tulsa, OK	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR	300.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wellington, KS	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	34.00
Anonymous	1,276.00
Dividing checks	300.00
Sub Total	\$3,810.00
TOTAL	\$5,818.34
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	490.00
Postage	595.21
Supplies	0
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Dividing checks	300.00
Bank charge	13.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,874.17
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,944.17



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

6-1-2020 to 6-30-2020

Beginning Balance	\$3,114.21
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	200.00
Calvary I. B. C., Sumas, WA	100.00
.....	525.00
TOTAL	3,639.21
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	403.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	403.98
.....	3,235.23
Interest	+0.03
ENDING BALANCE	\$3,235.26

The Joyful Sound

(Continued from page 23) ♦

countenance.” What does it mean to walk in the light of God’s countenance? This rather common expression in the Psalms (4:6; 44:3) means to walk under the smile of God’s face. Those who know the joyful sound have a godly walk before God and the world. Each day they live in His favor and enjoy His blessings.

Those who know the joyful sound desire to walk in the enjoyment of God’s gracious presence. They seek to have fellowship and communion with Him daily. They want to live in consciousness of His love. They aim to be blessed with the comforts of His Holy Spirit. Day after day they walk and talk so they **“may be accepted of him”** (II Cor. 5:9) and **“may please him”** (II Tim. 2:4).

There is no happiness like knowing that we have the smiles and favors of the Lord! We can walk through trials, troubles, tears, turmoils, and tribulations, knowing the light of His countenance shines upon us. This makes earth’s rugged places smooth and her dark places bright. The light of His countenance turns our willows into palms. It matters not if we walk in shadow or sunshine, we shall continue to have the favor of God until time be no more and our warfare ends.

CONCLUSION

1. Believers walk continually before the Lord. God commanded Abraham: **“Walk before me, and be thou perfect”** (Gen. 17:1). Hezekiah told the Lord: **“O LORD, remember how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight”** (II Kings 20:3). How we

need to walk with God as did Enoch (Gen. 5:22). What a place of safety! God will never let us out of His sight!

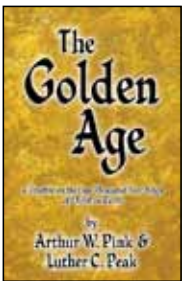
2. Those made happy by the gospel are ever ready to transmit the good news from the river to the ends of the earth. We do not want to keep the good news. We dare not hide the joyful sound. We must do all within our power to carry the gospel to **“all nations”** (Matt. 28:19) and **“every creature”** (Mark 16:15).

The winds cannot chant this joyful sound of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The sunbeams cannot write it in the blue sky. The waves of the sea cannot chime that Jesus saves. Men must tell the good news. So let us sound out the gospel of grace until it goes **“unto the ends of the world”** (Rom. 10:18).

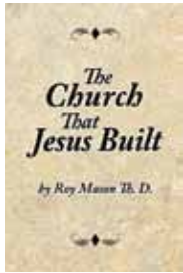
3. Have you heard the good news? Do you know the joyful sound? How tragic to hear the gospel and then fail to understand it. May it please the Lord to open your Satan-blinded eyes to see **“the light of the glorious gospel of Christ”** (II Cor. 4:4). God grant the gospel of Christ may this day become to you **“the power of God unto salvation”** (Rom. 1:16).



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

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

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

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

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

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