

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

What Is Christmas?

By E. G. Cook
(1898 - 1986)

In the light of God's Word, how can anything with a Christian name be popular with the world? In John 7:7 Jesus said the world hates Him and in John 15:19 He said the world hates His people. But in spite of all that, everybody loves Christmas. The vilest sinner in town will run over you, if necessary, in order to celebrate his Christmas. If you have any doubts as to whether the world loves Christmas or not, just go into one of our large department stores, or Ten Cent stores, during the last few frantic hours of Christmas shopping and see if the sinners don't elbow you just as quickly, and tackle you just as hard as the saints do.

As I meditated upon that question the thought came to me that if I would make a feast everyone would love, I must give



everyone what he wanted. If I wanted the Orientals to come to my feast I would serve rice, if I wanted the Italians to be there I would serve spaghetti, for the Russians I would be sure to serve plenty of vodka. In other words, if I wanted everyone to come and enjoy my feast I must give everyone what he wants. Then the thought came to me that maybe that is just what has happened to Christmas. So I began to search the reference books to see if that were true.

I had to go to the secular books because I was unable to find it in my Bible. It was truly amazing what I found, and what you can find if you will only look for it, concerning the most loved of

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The Privilege and Peril of Opportunity

By George W. Truett
(1867 - 1944)

"For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise. . .from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14).

The book of Esther is probably not widely read, and yet it is a story of surpassing interest and instructiveness. There is in it much to shock you, just as there probably would be in the history of any capital or any court of any country of the world. Superficial readers of the Bible sometimes start back at what they find in the Bible. The Bible tells the truth, the whole truth. There is no veneer



about the Bible. It does not gloss over and seek to cover defects. The Bible pictures humanity just as it is. And in this old-time story that centers about Queen Esther, much as there is in it to shock us, yet

there is very much in it to teach us and to inspire us for the highest and best.

The account given in the book of Esther goes far back in Bible history to the time when the Jews were in exile, scattered afar over all the countries of the East, and the plot for the story of Esther was laid in Shushan, the capital of the kingdom of Persia. Esther was a relative

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Salvation Is Free

By Timothy Hille
of Ashland, Illinois

Luke 7:36-50

Our subject is the freeness of salvation that is in Christ Jesus. Let me begin by stating that one of the reasons salvation is free is because you could not pay the price necessary to obtain it. The freeness of salvation is something that is taught throughout the Scriptures. **"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price"** (Isa. 55:1). **"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely"** (Rev. 22:17). So if anyone preaches or teaches that there is a price tag attached to the gift of God which is eternal life through faith in Christ Jesus, that person is apparently



not at all familiar with the salvation set forth in God's eternal Word.

In our text, we find Jesus during His earthly ministry while He was here in the flesh, before He offered Himself at Calvary to pay our sin debt, attending a dinner at the house of a Pharisee named Simon, to whose house the Lord had been invited. While at this man's house, a woman who was known for her sinful lifestyle came in and began to wash the feet of Jesus with her tears, wipe them with her hair, kiss them, and anoint them with expensive oil. We also find Jesus teaching some remarkable truths in a parable, and it is these teachings that we want to primarily notice by the help of the Spirit of God. There are two main

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Unconditional Surrender

By Paul Stepp
Indore, West Virginia

My text today comes from I Kings 20:1-4. **"And Benhadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it. And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Benhadad, Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine. And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have."**

Now, I want to notice the sayings and the happenings here in these circumstances that Ahab and Benhadad found themselves in.

AHAB GAVE ALL THAT HE HAD
We read the words of Ahab, that he



spoke unto King Benhadad: **". . . My Lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have"** (I Kings 20:4). Ahab was a man that had committed himself to do evil, perhaps,

like no other king of Israel. In fact, we might even say that Ahab was a man that unconditionally surrendered himself to do evil in the sight of the Lord. (We read about Ahab's insatiable desire to do evil in I Kings 21:17-26.)

But let's go on to think just a little farther about this man Ahab. Though Ahab was a man who desired wealth and riches (see I Kings 21:1-5); and though he was a man who was generally desirous of pleasing only himself and was not concerned with the feelings (or lives)

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Repentance is a change of mind which results in a change of conduct. It involves a change in the outward life because such a change is a result of the change of inward opinions. True repentance is not external reformation of life. Reformation follows true repentance yet we must never confuse the two. It is the fruit, not the root. -- Milburn Cockrell

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

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What Is Christmas?

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all seasons of the year. According to the most authentic sources available, and I will even throw in the Catholic reference works because on this point they all agree, there never was a Christmas before the middle of the fourth century, even in Rome. In Jerusalem, it was first observed in the fifth century, and then we are told it caused rioting in the streets.

I searched through at least a dozen of the world's leading reference works on the subject and they all agree that no one knew the date of Christ's birth, and some of them say we cannot be sure as to the actual year in which He was born. But, in order for the Catholic Church to have a big feast day, it was necessary for some date to be set for His birthday. The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia says that in order for the shepherds to have been out that night with their flocks it would have been necessary for His birth to have occurred sometime between March and September. The Catholic Church however, could not celebrate Christmas at that time of the year as we shall see later. It must be in December whether there were any shepherds and sheep out that night or not. It became really interesting when I began searching for the reason why it must be in December.

First, however, let us consider some of the things which were put into Christmas to make it so universally loved. In Babylon, that great heathen Chaldean city, pagan religion reached its peak so far as ancient history was concerned. Here in Babylon the queen of heaven and her son had their beginnings in the persons of Semeramis and her son, Tammuz. When Belshazzar was slain (Daniel 5:30) and the Chaldeans defeated by Darius, the Mede, it seems the capital of the pagan religious world was moved from Babylon to Pergamos. Later, at the death of Attalus III, Phrygia was given to the Roman Empire in 133 B.C. The Babylonian pagan worship was then removed to Rome where Semeramis and Tammuz became Fortuna and Jupiter. This queen of heaven and her son became the very heart of pagan, or idol worship throughout the world. They were called by different names in different countries. In Egypt they were Isis and Osiris, in India they were Isi and Iswara, in other parts of Asia they were Cybele and Deolius, in Greece they were Ceres and Plutus, but they were all the same queen of heaven and her son. All of these were dumped into Christmas under the new name of Mary and Jesus. This new name did not affect the pagan people of the world too much, for no matter what you call a dish of tender fried chicken it is still a very tasty dish.

I learned that the more religion the Catholic Church put into Christmas

the more popular it became. The world is a great lover of religion so long as the Christ of Calvary and His shed blood are left out of it.

Now with all the ingredients in Christmas, it is time to look for the reason why Christmas must be in December. Even back in ancient Babylon the birth of Tammuz was celebrated in our December. The heathen sun worshippers throughout the northern hemisphere all celebrated the rebirth of the sun at the time of its turning back toward the North, that is about December 25. Tammuz, Osiris, Iswara, Deolius, Plutus and Jupiter were all representatives of the sun of their respective countries. These heathen people had been brought into the Catholic Church, mainly through the efforts of Constantine the Great. They were still just as heathen as they were before they were incorporated into the Catholic Church, and they were going to continue celebrating this great feast at this same time. It did not matter too much what their god was called. It was still a representative of their sacred god, the sun. But the time of their feast could not be changed because the sun starts on his return toward the North at only one time of the year. Even old Satan, with the help of all his able efficient co-workers, could not change the time. Therefore, Christmas had to be December 25, whether the shepherds were out that night with their flocks or not.

As much as the head of the Catholic Church likes to boast of his God-like power and authority, this was one time when he was completely helpless. He had absolutely no choice in the matter. His problem was clear. If he wanted to make good Catholics out of his host of heathens he must give their queen of heaven and their god a Christian name. So Mary and Jesus had to be the name and December 25 had to be the date. Had Bishop Julian I, been really and truly interested in setting the real date of Christ's birth, the month of December would not have been considered at all, because anyone who is at all familiar with the climate conditions which prevail in Palestine during the month of December would know there were no shepherds and sheep out in the field at that time of the year.

With Christmas literally loaded down with the world's religion it is easy to see why the world loves Christmas, but we see people observing the feast who should not be lured into the feast of the pagan gods. The Baptists themselves seem to be trying to out-spend, out-shine and out-do the world in the world's own feast. If you ask why they are at this feast, some would unthinkingly say it is because Mary and Jesus are in it. But that statement won't stand when we turn the light of God's Word upon it. Jesus, Himself, said the world hates Him, and He is not a liar. So it is easy to see that if He were in Christmas that would completely ruin

it for the world. The world would care no more for Christmas than they do for the church if Christ were really in it. If He could be put in it, I can just see Him plaiting that whip again. When I see posters which read, "Let's put Christ back in Christmas," I always think of the story of the boy from a backwoods family who went away to college. Upon his return home he wanted to improve the family's grammar, so when his younger brother said pass the lasses, he said don't say lasses, say molasses. His brother retorted, how can I ask for mo'lasses when I ain't had no lasses? So how can we put Christ back in Christmas when He has never been in it? Maybe we should let God tell us why we Baptists are so deeply in love with Christmas. If we read Jeremiah 5:30-31 in our everyday language it says, the preacher's preach false things and the priests run things their own way, and my people love to have it so. The Baptist people run after the false gods and false religion connected with Christmas simply because they love it. Why do so many preach false things concerning Christmas when they can find nothing in the Bible, nor in authentic secular history to justify what they teach and preach?

With everybody, including the Baptists, partaking of Christmas, it was time to give it that good old Christmas spirit. You know, that spirit that makes you feel that it is perfectly all right for you to do things you could not afford to do at any other time of the year. If the drunkard refused to drink on Christmas and the harlot became virtuous for the day, we might be able to say this Christmas spirit is the Spirit of Christ. But it is an undeniable fact that untold thousands of people drink at Christmas without any compunction of conscience who would not drink at all any other time of the year. All manner of evil and God-provoking things are done at this season of the year because this is Christmas.

Do you believe it is the Spirit of Christ that causes thousands of people to line up in the saloons of the land at Christmas time who never go near them at any other time? I know there are people who will say that is not the real Christmas spirit, but I wonder if that is not just a weak effort on our part to try to justify our participation in this ungodly thing called Christmas. Certainly it is not the Spirit of Christ that gives us all that freedom at Christmas time, but rather it is the spirit of Saturnalia. In ancient pagan Rome a week of feasting and merry-making was observed in the later part of December. During this feast everyone, even the slaves, were permitted to do just as they pleased. Things like gambling, etc., which were prohibited at other times, were winked at during Saturnalia. This feast was brought over from ancient pagan Rome by modern pagan Rome and dumped into Christmas to give it that

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What Is Christmas?

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tangy flavor and make people look forward to it with great anticipation.

As you recall, I stated in the beginning that I was unable to find Christmas in my Bible, but after learning a little about this lovely season from other sources, I was able to find quite a lot about it in my Bible. In Jeremiah 7:18 I found that even in his day, some 600 years before Christ was born of the virgin Mary, the children gathered wood, the men kindled the fire, and the women made cakes to the queen of heaven, to provoke God to wrath. In Jeremiah 10:3-5 I learned that the customs of the people in his day were vain because they went out in the woods with an ax, cut down a tree, took hammer and nails to fasten it upright, and then decorated it with silver and gold. God said it was a vain custom, and vanity is one thing He hates. I must confess that I have done the same thing many times except that I used much cheaper decorations. Christmas, like the groves in Israel, is so beautiful. What could be more beautiful than a Christmas tree with all its decorations and gifts? Surely nothing unless it was the original Christmas trees decorated with silver and gold. But when I think of the beauty of Christmas, I am reminded of the tabernacle. In Exodus 26 we find that all that the world saw was the skins of animals, but on the inside it was overlaid with gold and had all manner of beautiful curtains and hangings. The beauty of the tabernacle was hidden from the world, but not so with Christmas. The beauty of Christmas is on the outside in plain view of everyone, but on the inside are dead men's bones. All manner of drinking, debauchery and unclean living is covered over with the beautiful cloak of Christmas. But in Revelation 17 and 18 we have a ghastly picture of the Catholic Church, including her Christmas and fabulous Christmas trade, which will cause all that weeping and wailing when it is finally cut off (Daniel 9:27), and in Revelation 18:4 Christ says, **"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."**

It is not an easy thing to come out of her. No one wants to be a kill-joy or an old Scrooge. Many will say that Christmas has become a part of our American way of life, and that is so true. It has become about as much a part of our way of life as idolatry had in the Jew's way of life in Israel and Judah, and if I remember correctly it took the destruction of their country and enslavement of the Jewish people to tear them away from their idol gods.

If anyone has any evidence to justify our participation in Christmas, please let it be known. I have searched in vain. I have heard that one about its being handed

down to us by our fore-fathers, but it seems to me that would come under the heading of commandments of men, and Jesus did not sound too complimentary in Matthew 15:9 when He said, **"In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."**



Privilege and Peril

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of a good man named Mordecai. She was an orphaned Jewess, and Mordecai, her guardian, was as a father to her, as devoted to her, indeed, as she was to him. By a remarkable combination of circumstances this beautiful woman was promoted to be the queen of the great kingdom of Persia. She was chosen as the wife of Ahasuerus, the course and drunken and debauched king. She was elevated to the highest place, that of queen in the king's palace. About the time of her elevation, one Haman was also elevated to a place of great prominence in the affairs of state. He was made the right hand man of King Ahasuerus. He was next to the king himself in the management of the kingdom. In such position of state, Haman had a difficulty with Mordecai, the relative of Queen Esther. The difficulty arose because Mordecai, a devout Jew, refused to bow down to Haman, a pagan, and not only pay him respect by bowing down, but also by worshipping him. Some of the old-time kings did not at all object to their subjects worshipping them. Probably some of them would not object now.

But Mordecai refused to bow to Haman. Mordecai bowed to One high over all. The Lord of Hosts was His name. And the people associated with Haman twitted him with the indifference of this man Mordecai to one in exalted position, and revenge settled down upon the little life of the little man Haman, nor could he find music, nor rest, nor happiness anywhere, as long as that despised Jew refused to do him the obeisance and the worship that his station called for. Elevation tests men. If a man is not bigger than his job, he is not big enough

for his job. Any man who is not bigger personally than the station he occupies is not big enough for that station. What a trial to a land when little men, and mean men, and unworthy men sit in the seats of the mighty and direct the destinies of the people! **"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn"** (Prov. 29:2). For the wicked pull everything down. Ideals are pulled from their high pedestals and are laid prostrate in the streets. **"Woe unto thee, O land,"** cried one of the old Hebrew prophets, **"when thy king is a child"** (Eccl. 10:16). The meaning of the proverb is immediately evident. If one in position of preeminence and power is a child, a baby, a pet, a spoiled incompetent, then woe to the country! Haman was such a man as that. If he had been a big man he would have said, "Why, I respect conscientiousness wherever I see it; this man Mordecai has his religion, and his religion does not allow him to bow down to king, or to anybody, save to God alone; I respect a man who is faithful to his convictions/" If he had been a big man, that is what he would have thought and said. But a little man cannot do that, and a little nature cannot stop with just a little revenge.

Mordecai's slight so deeply affected this man Haman that he said, "I will not stop until I shall have exterminated from the face of the earth every Jew--not simply Mordecai, but all the rest. They must all go." And so, with subtlety and cunning he got around the king, and inveigled him into a trap, so that the king, without measuring the consequences and knowing all the conditions, signed and sent forth a decree to the effect that on a certain day all the Jews of the realm were to be exterminated. When the news of this decree reached the Jewish people they were prostrated, panic-stricken, appalled, covered with sackcloth and ashes, undone. And Mordecai was more distraught than any of them, for the occasion of it all gathered around him. Mordecai had stood out faithfully for his convictions, and he was the unwitting occasion of the tragedy and the calamity that had come in wholesale fashion to

his countrymen; and, in the streets, Mordecai lifted up his voice and wept with uncontrollable lamentation.

By and by Mordecai fell upon a plan to save his people. He sent word to Esther, the queen, in the king's palace, Mordecai's kinswoman and devoted ward, that the only hope left for her people was for her to go in boldly to the king, and make supplication for them; to ask him to retract his edict, to withdraw the awful sentence that had gone forth against the Jewish people. There was nothing left but for the queen to take that extraordinary course. And the queen hesitated and sent word to her kinsman Mordecai: "You must remember that there is a law in vogue that nobody can go into the presence of the king, except on penalty of death, without the king's invitation. If the king should stretch out the golden scepter to one entering without invitation, such a one would live. Otherwise such a one would die. And I am now unfortunately situated toward the king, because for thirty days he has not had me in his presence at all."

And Mordecai made reply: "You cannot escape, O Esther, by any such silence as that. You are a Jewess, too, and though that has been concealed, that fact will come out, and you will go down in the maelstrom with all the rest of us; and I advise you further, that if you hold your peace altogether at this time, nevertheless enlargement and deliverance will come to the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will be destroyed. And, Esther, I raise the supreme question with you, What are you a queen for, but to do a great deed, unselfish and worthy, when the hour of opportunity comes?"

That is a great speech from Mordecai. Will the young queen worthily meet it? Grandly does she meet it. Grandly does she reply: "Tell Mordecai to ask the Jews in Shushan to give themselves three days and three nights to fasting, and I with my maids here in the palace will do the same thing; and then, though the edict has gone forth, and though there stands another edict that one cannot enter into the presence of the king uninvited, except upon penalty of death, nevertheless, I will go in, and I will make that plea to the king, and, if I perish, I perish." Her reply was sublime. There was never a sublimer speech made than beautiful Esther made in that last moment: "I am going to take my life in my hands; I am going to offer myself without stint or reserve, a sacrifice for my people; if I perish, I perish." Never was a nobler speech made, never a higher note sounded.

That is the setting for this old-time story of surpassing interest, and there emerge from such a story some very plain lessons, but lessons of challenging importance for our attention today. Let us glance briefly at some of them.

First of all, Esther sought to be silent

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Privilege and Peril

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and shrank back. She was timid and unresponsive before the clarion call of duty. She said, "I must hold my peace; I must be silent; I am the queen. My condition is such that my situation, my present, my future, my happiness, my life, my all, are involved. Mordecai, I will have to be silent." She was tempted to be silent when duty called for courageous speech, tempted to shirk responsibility, tempted to evade the clear path of duty. Now, who has not been in that identical situation, time and time again? Duty clear as the sunlight has stood before us, its path was not at all bordered by flowers, and lions roared at every step of the way. Frowns were there, difficulties, mountains, all sorts of oppositions, and we shrank back and said, "I cannot face this situation." Who has not known such an experience?

There are sins of silence as well as sins of speech. Time and time again we have bitten deep into our tongues, because we have sinned with our tongues. We have talked when we ought not to have talked. There are sins of speech, but equally so there are sins of silence. There are times when men are silent when they had better die than be that. Men move among their fellows with power to command them at their will; men have been as Samson in their might to pull down great pillars and to withstand hosts of Philistines, but the time comes when, like Samson, they dally with evil and are shorn of their strength. There is a time to be silent, and even so there is a time when silence means death to everything high and noble. When issues of moment confront us, when great causes are at stake, when the forces of righteousness and evil are in deadly combat, woe betide any man who is truckling and servile and disobedient to the heavenly vision!

Now, every man is tempted vitally at that point. The difference between a politician and a statesman is at that point. Not even with chains can you draw out of a politician something that might embarrass him; but the statesman stands forth and says, "Here I take my stand. This is right. If I never get another vote, this is right. Here I take my stand. I can do no other. God help me, this is right." That is the difference. Time and again Gladstone spurned the fickle whims of the populace. He said, "I know that there is a tomorrow coming, and I must follow the clear behest of right." Now, we are tempted, every one of us, as was this beautiful Queen Esther, to be silent and devious and disobedient, when we ought to be candid and direct and aggressively faithful.

There is a silence of expediency. That word "expediency" has been hawked about until it is difficult to keep from

despising it. There is a temptation to be expedient and not to be right. And then there is a temptation to be silent on account of selfishness. Esther has just come to the throne, to the exalted place of queen. She is the first woman in all the proud kingdom of Persia. She is fawned upon and flattered by the people everywhere. To say to the king, "I am of that despised people whom your chief minister of state hounds with all the fury of some mad beast. I am one of them, their fate is mine, their God is mine, their cause is mine, their present mine, their future mine, their death mine, if it is to be death---" to say that calls for the highest principle and courage known to the human heart. She shrank back. You do not blame her. You are not surprised. "Very well, Esther," said Mordecai; "I have another thing to say to you. You will not escape by neglecting your duty. God can go on without any of us, my child, and He will. Esther, you may sell your people out, and in this poignant crisis of their history, surpassingly pathetic through the exiles that have come to us, you may betray us, and leave us, and forget us, and sell us out; but Esther, deliverance and enlargement will come from another quarter. The Jew is not going to be buried and demolished and overwhelmed. Esther, I believe in the promises of God; I believe in the purposes of a righteous Jehovah; and though you may be time-serving and silent and cowardly, yet deliverance and enlargement for our people will come from some other

source. God's covenant with the Jews will not fail. God's promises to His old-time Israel will not be broken."

Here was a faithful friend of God, this man Mordecai. He believed God's promises and clung to them with all the childlike faith that should ever characterize the friends of God. He was a Jew of the old time, of the highest quality. The Jew is the miracle of history. He is the standing miracle around this planet. This man, the Jew Mordecai, said, "I cannot bow down to that man Haman, because I am a Jew. I believe in God. I cannot put anything between my soul and God." And Mordecai rose up with all the calmness and confidence of the faith of the old Hebrews, and clung to the covenant of God and the purposes of God for Israel.

I repeat that the Jew is the standing miracle of the ages. If you can think of the Jew without a stirring in your heart unspeakably pathetic, strange is your heart, and cold and well-nigh dead. Our Lord was a Jew, and His mother a Jewess, and the old-time prophets were Jew, and the apostles of the faith of Christ, which faith is the hope of the world, were Jews. O ye men and women of God's modern Israel, saved men and women, Gentiles who have come in where the Jew of old turned aside from the covenant and the promises and the faith. O modern Israel, pray without ceasing for the Hebrew race! They are scattered everywhere. They are in every community, alert, forward-looking. They are scattered

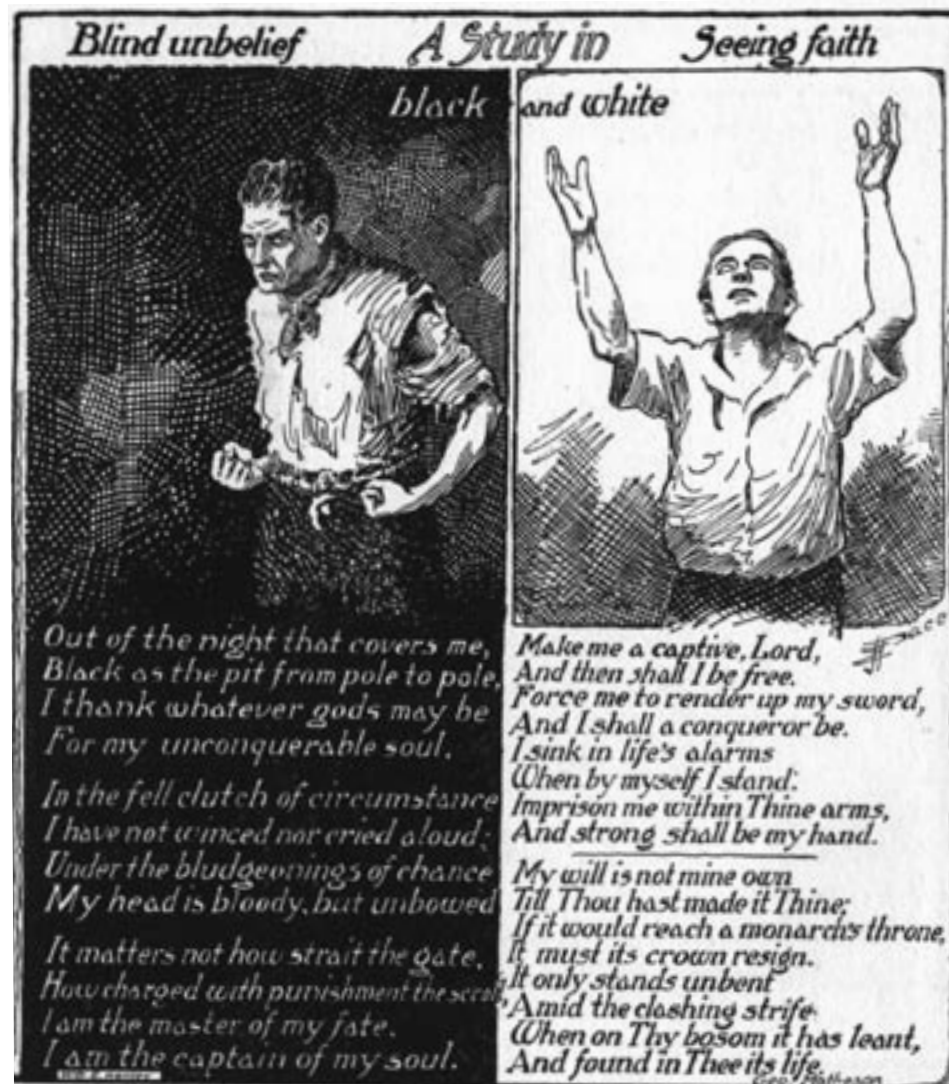
everywhere and times without count have been the victims of persecution, the shame of which comes up into the face of God. But they have a great destiny, and some day that mighty race, scattered to the four winds, that alert and forward-looking race, is to come back and own the Messiah's sway, and serve Him Who was crucified on yonder cross. May God hasten the coming of that wonderful day!

Mordecai was a Jew, and he said to beautiful Esther, his ward, "Deliverance will come, my child, and enlargement for our people, whether you do or do not do your duty." Now, isn't that a wonderful truth for us to think about for a moment? God can get on without us. He can get on without any of us. He can get on without a nation. He can get on without a religious denomination. He can get on without any of us if He be so minded. "Esther, you may be cowering and evasive and silent. God is not dependent on you. You hold the key to a vast opportunity to do a great service for the world. My child, you can fail, you can falter. God will somehow take care of His people. He will get on without you, if you are going to have it that way."

Yes, God can get on without us. See how He is getting on without the Hebrew race today. One of the old prophets has explained the religious failure of that race: "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself" (Hosea 10:1). Let a nation begin and end with self and God will make all His plans to get on without such a nation. The one outstanding nation of the centuries back yonder was the Jewish nation, but it has long been broken and scattered to the ends of the earth. Macaulay, you remember, writing about England, and about England's perils, faithfully warned England and said, "The day may come when the far-off New Zealander shall stand on the ruins of London, the world's great city, and trace the awful steps of her decline and deterioration and death, because she dared to get on without obedience to the principles of righteousness." God can get on without a nation---let us not forget that solemn truth.

We are prone to say and to think---I think it, and so do you---that God has brought our own nation forth to be and to send forth a light unequalled in all the tides of human history. And yet, if this nation shall pursue ideals low and debauching and false, God will choose another somewhere else to pilot the world out of darkness into light. If this nation goes after greed and militarism and a thousand false gods that turn the heart away from the highest and fill it with pride and selfishness, God will set aside this and choose another nation. He can raise one up with the word of His power and the blessing of His Spirit that

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will carry the light forward and take care of His truth, as His unfolding purpose is revealed to the world. We need to remember that. God scattered of old the marvelous power of Macedon and laid in the very dust the mighty dominion of Rome. Macedon and Rome turned away from God and forgot Him. And if England and America---these two proud Anglo-Saxon nations, set in the midst of the ages to do a work for the world, unexampled, unequaled---if they forget God, and are spoiled by wrong ideals and corrupted by low standards, God will find Him other peoples to carry forward His banner and to be His messengers to mankind.

He who reads the Bible, even with casual attention cannot fail to see that God is the God of nations as well as of individuals, and that a nation may fill a large place in God's plan. He chose that Israelitish nation of old for peculiar honor and exceptional favor, and laid upon such nation certain high duties and responsibilities which did not belong to other nations. He set apart such nation to preserve His laws and to execute His plans for the human race. By the mouths of His prophets, He rebuked that chosen nation for its sins, chastened it for its backslidings, and used even hostile nations as His messengers of chastisement. Surely, surely, in the face of the responsibilities and warnings written large in the history of nations, it behooves leaders of this great Western democracy to discern her high mission and summon all her people to the high task of fulfilling such mission.

Great voices have all along proclaimed the greatness of the mission of America. One of them has said, "Our whole history appears like a last appeal of divine Providence in behalf of the human race." Pungently has another said, "The American democracy is the result of all that is great in bygone times. All led up to it; it embodies all. Mt. Sinai is in it; Greece is in it; Egypt is in it; Rome is in it; England is in it; all the arts are in it, and all the reformations and all the discoveries." If we forget and are purblind to the purposes of God, this nation may not hope to escape the doom of the unfaithful nations of the past. A greatly honored former President has said, "We have no choice, we people of the United States, as to whether or not we shall play a great part in the world. That has been determined for us by Fate [surely he meant by Providence], by the march of events. We have to play that part. All we can decide is whether we shall play it well or ill." Another national leader has said, "It is ours to be either the grave in which the hope of the world shall be entombed, or the pillar of cloud which shall pilot the

world forward." We do well to ponder afresh today the burning message of Kipling's "Recessional," even every line of it:

*God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine---
Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget---lest we forget!*

*The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget---lest we forget!*

*Far-called, our navies melt away;
On dune and headland sinks the fire;
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Trye!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget---lest we forget!*

*If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
Or lesser breeds, without the Law---
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget---lest we forget!*

*For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding calls not Thee to guard,
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy mercy on thy people, Lord.*

Carlyle was right when he declared that religion is the determining factor of civilization. A nation rises no higher than the religious life of her people. The nobly gifted Sidney Lanier, while yet a schoolboy, wrote with the vision of a prophet these pungent words in his notebook: "Liberty, patriotism and civilization are on their knees before the men of the South, and with clasped hands and streaming eyes are begging them to become Christian." By every great motive that can move human hearts in great deeds, let the pulpits of America, her statesmen and editors and poets, her business and professional forces, all groups and classes, be glad to pour the energies of their brain and the tides of their sympathy into the supreme business of fully Americanizing our whole population by evangelizing it. Let the United States of America forget her highest ideal, her supreme mission to mankind, and God will find some other people to be His witnesses and messengers.

Let us bring the solemn truth still closer home and apply it to Christ's own people. He can get on without a given denomination. He can get on without a particular congregation---if we forget---if we forget. He got on without the seven churches of Asia, for they forgot. They turned away from the ideals and

calls of the highest, and were selfish and worldly, and became time-servers, and the candlestick was taken out of the candlestand from the midst of every one of them. He can get on without any of us. Back yonder the people of England trifled in their religious life, and God brought forth Wesley and said, "Go up and down the earth and all the people back to spirituality and to vital godliness." And Wesley shook England, and came across the waters and moved our own country as well. Yonder in Germany, when ritualism was in the ascendancy, and when forms were taking precedence of vitality in spiritual life, He raised up Luther to shake Germany, and Europe, and the papacy, and the world! God is independent of any particular class or organization, and if they forget He will find another method, another agent, another means to have His cause advanced and His standard carried to the highest hill. I am often alarmed about my own denomination, which I love better than I love my life. I think she has truths which this world needs, beyond all human speech. I think she has great doctrines of civil and religious liberty, concerning which she has been the mighty champion, as the centuries have passed. I think she has an emphasis on the doctrine of personality in religion which is of measureless moment. I think she has an emphasis on spirituality, as the one supreme hope, without which all else is but a galvanized corpse. But woe betide her if she gets off into the little eddies and forgets the great, deep currents that God has for His people to navigate, with His mighty ships of mercy and power and grace and service!

"God can get on, O Esther, without you, if you are going to have it that way. He can get on without you, child." He can get on without a family. He can get on without a man. That is an alarming revelation of history in these United States, that every third generation of rich families are on the beat as tramps. The first generation makes the money, the second spends it, and the third are on the beat, with habits of idleness and waste---every third generation. God can get on without us, if we are going to have it that way, but we cannot get on without Him. Ten thousand times better were it for beautiful Esther to go down under the fury of Ahasuerus and Haman; ten thousand times better for beautiful Esther to go down into the awful death that is imminent for the people than for her to forget duty and principle in the great day of opportunity.

Retribution surely follows neglect of duty. "Esther, if you hold your peace at this time, deliverance will come from another source, but you and your father's house will perish." Why? Because whatsoever a man soweth, or a woman, or a family, or a church, or an organization, or a nation, the reaping shall be in like

kind. Let duty be neglected anywhere, at any time, by anybody, and retribution like a mad Nemesis is on the heels of such neglect. You cannot neglect duty without the most fearful consequences. Retribution ever follows neglect of duty. O, if we would but remember that! Let a parent neglect his duty there in the home; let him be indifferent to the proper standards and ideals of such a home. let him put gold and the things of time and earth high over the rest; let him put into the background the deepest and most vital things of life, and he has a wrecked family on his hands, and his children after him will rise up to mock him for his defalcation in the day of his opportunity. A family that today neglects the highest things shall sadly pay for it tomorrow. If the cheap and gaudy things of earth are put in the ascendancy, there is inevitable heartbreak tomorrow. There is a payday tomorrow. Out from the fearful ashes of human life the black Nemesis of retribution will follow and present its product and say, "This is the product for neglecting duty." Duty neglected means retribution---let us realize it in time!

O, if we would realize it! The maddest thing in the world is to do wrong. The most stupid folly in the world is to do wrong. The most grievous waste in the world is to do wrong. Let any man in the world neglect the call of God, the claims of Christ, the Master of men; let such claims be ignored and forgotten and there comes a retribution for such neglect too perilous for me to depict in human speech. "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it. Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." You cannot trifle with any duty in the world and not be harmed. You cannot trifle with a duty in the home, or in the State, or toward God, and not be harmed. You cannot trifle with duty anywhere, at any time, but that retribution follows in the wake of your trifling and presents you with the wretched product of your deed. God can get on without us, but we cannot get on without Him.

Suffer me to detain you a moment longer. Mordecai reminds Esther what opportunity is for: "**Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?**" (Esther 4:14). He said, "Child, what do you think that strange combination of circumstances meant in exalting you to the place of queen? I tell you, child, you have come to the place of preferment and exaltation and honor and world-wide power to do a great unselfish thing to help the people." The meaning of all power is stated in that sentence. What is the meaning of all power? All power means service. All power means responsibility. All power means obligation. All power means ministering to the limit of such power to help the world. Some man selfishly draws his garment about him and says, "May I

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not do as I please with my money?" Not on the peril of the highest. "May I not do as I please with my position? Here I am monarch of all I survey." The Nemesis shall come during the night and your monarchy shall be overturned, if that is your conception of power. Somebody says, "May I not take my education and draw my robes about me, and go off into some quiet nook and read and dream and loll?" Not on the peril of the highest. A Nemesis shall be on your heels. All power is under inescapable obligation to serve the world. You will answer at the judgment bar of God for every dime your fingers have ever touched. You will answer for every opportunity of every kind that ever came your way. You will answer for your education, and if another as good as you could not get his, your answer is the larger and more responsible. You will answer because you were given preferment and position and power and turned them to selfish aggrandizement. You will answer for it all. You are your brother's keeper, and if you ignore that brother the blood of that brother will cry unto God against you. Ignore the world's need, and the world's darkness, and the world's sickness, and the world's wounds, and the world's sin, and God will somehow carry forward His purposes; but retribution appalling will come to you. Your education is not given you that you may get off into some corner and chatter in poly-syllables that people may say how smart you are. Your education is given you that you may fling off your coat and get into the big battle of life, to help the weak and needy and downtrodden, the ignorant and the beaten on the roadside, to help them up and on to happiness and noblest serviceableness. Your money is not given you that you may loll and dress and dawdle. The world needs it, and woe betide those who forget what money is for! The meaning of all opportunity always is service. It is not enough for a man to be clever. It is not enough for a man to be smart. It is not enough for a man to be a scholar. It is not enough for a man to be a moneymaker. The meaning of all strength is to serve the world. The correct life principle for all mankind is Paul's principle of debtorship to all. All power is under inexorable bonds to serve humanity.

Let us side with God, whatever it costs. "He always wins who sides with God. To him no cause is lost." Let us side with God. Let us side with Him in our families. Let us side with Him as citizens. Let us side with Him as moneymakers. Let us side with Him as teachers and students. Let us side with Him as individuals. Let us ever side with God; and if we have defaulted, if we have been untrue, if we have slipped

and forgotten and failed, blessed be His grace, there is deliverance, and there is recovery, and there is forgiveness, and there is a divine power pledged to help us today, tomorrow, and forever, if we will faithfully side with God!

"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:16).



"Way Side Hearers"

By E. D. Strickland
(1915 - 2003)

How can the non-elect have the Word of God preached to him and be saved? The Scriptures clearly teach that only the elect of God shall be saved, (Luke 8:12).

Before we seek to give a specific answer to the question above and agree with the positive statement, let us briefly examine the immediate context and one reference a little farther away in the Old Testament.

Jesus is the Master teacher and He excelled in the parabolic method. A parable is the compare together (Gr.). It is the inculcation of spiritual illustrated by object or narrative in the natural realm.

It follows that the unspiritual minds or hearts of hearers would not understand the spiritual application of the parable, (II Cor. 2:14). The mind (heart) spiritually renewed would in understanding, progress from the natural narrative to the spiritual application. The parable of the sower teaches that His true followers come to know new truth, (Luke 8:15). To others who had ears (physical) and heard not (did not understand) the truth Jesus taught, remained hid.

"If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost" (II Cor. 4:3).

Jesus connected His parabolic teaching with Isaiah 6:9-10. Compare Isaiah with Jesus in Matt. 13:13-16, **"And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed"** (Isa. 6:9-10).

"Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and

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Unconditional

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of others (see I Kings 21:13-16); still, when it came time to deal with this King Benhadad, he was willing to part with all that he had, even his wives, so that he and the others around him might live. These verses show us, after that we have seen how temporal and physical were the desires of Ahab, just how much he was willing to give up when he surrendered to Benhadad. Ahab loved these physical things, but he was willing to give them all up in his surrender to Benhadad.

WE SHOULD GIVE ALL THAT WE HAVE

Though Ahab was not a godly king; and though the happenings which we have referred to were not of a positive nature; still, I would like us to take his actions and apply them to a need that each of us has, if we are saved, in the lives which we live before our God and King--the One who has conquered sin, death, and Hell, and even the sin that does so easily beset us in our own lives.

Let's begin by using another Old Testament character as an example--- Abraham. We read about how Abraham was willing to surrender all that God had given unto him in Genesis 22:1-14. **"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham**

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hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they

hear" (Matt. 13:13-16).

In the parable of the sower Jesus had included two main classes of people. There were those who had their hearts prepared, they heard the Word, they perceived its meaning, and it brought forth fruit.

There were others who responded naturally in varied ways, but not having been born spiritually were unable to produce fruit in the realm of the Spirit.

I cannot see that the wayside hearers were ever of the elect, composing God's people, (Luke 8:5). The non-elect may receive the outward call of the gospel by the Word. But he does not receive the inward call of the Spirit.

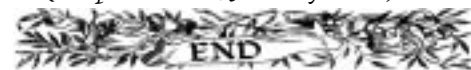
In I Cor. 2:4, Paul said his preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and power. This power is given to the elect through the preaching of the gospel made effective by the demonstrative work of the Holy Spirit.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

Receiving Him and believing on His name are strict evidences that they are the elect of God. They were given that power or right to experience Divine sonship. Relate this to Acts 13:48, **"As many as were ordained to eternal life believed."**

The non-elect may do many religious acts, demonstrate many noble deeds. But God knows not the non-elect savingly (Matt. 7:23).

The elect of God, in the Father's good time, will bring each of His children to spiritual worship without the loss of one. (Scripture Notes, January 1983)



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stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen. Here we find an account of the noble actions of a noble servant of God. Abraham was willing to part with the gift that God had given him. In fact, Abraham was willing, if God would require it, to sacrifice his only son (the very son that God had promised him, and he himself had waited on) to the cause and service of God. How much more, should we be willing to unconditionally surrender our lives unto the blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ?

I want to also use the New Testament apostles of Jesus Christ as examples of men that were willing---and indeed did---surrender themselves unto God. We read about the surrender of the apostles unto the service of Christ in Mark 10:28-30. **"Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."** These men had left all that mattered to men in the world---and they followed Jesus Christ. No matter what might be the cost, they were willing to leave all behind, and follow Jesus Christ.

In the course of their surrender unto God, we find that some of the disciples of Jesus Christ have even given their lives. We read in Luke 21:12, 16-17 **"But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. . . And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake."** The Lord prophesied of these things and Scriptures and history

bear these things out.

In fact, even a cursory examination of the history of mankind since the time of Jesus Christ, will prove that many of our forefathers have endured great persecution, and even death, because they have surrendered their all---even their lives---unto Jesus Christ. Again, we read the prophetic words of Jesus Christ in John 16:1-2: **"These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."** Certainly we have seen these prophecies fulfilled over and over again.

Considering the cost and the willingness to surrender that we see in the Apostles and in our forefathers in the faith, how much should we be willing to separate ourselves unto the service of Jesus Christ, and how much should we be willing to unconditionally surrender unto our Lord and Saviour?

BENHADAD DID NOT ACCEPT AHAB'S SURRENDER

But now, let's notice something interesting about Ahab's surrender. Even though he is an unwitting example for us, in that he was willing to give all that he had after the flesh; still, in the end, Benhadad did not accept King Ahab's surrender. (This is also interesting, later on Ahab would incorrectly accept Benhadad's surrender---I Kings 20:31-34, 42).

We read about Benhadad's refusal to accept Ahab's surrender in I Kings 20:5-10: **"And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Benhadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children; Yet I will send my servants unto thee to-morrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away. Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this man seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold; and I denied him not. And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not unto him, nor consent. Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Benhadad, Tell my lord the king. All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do: but this thing I may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again. And Benhadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me."** Even though Ahab had submitted his own desires to those of Benhadad; and even though he had surrendered himself

and his possessions unto Benhadad; we find that Benhadad was not honorable, and did not accept that surrender that he himself had demanded.

So often this is the plight of men in this life. We may unconditionally surrender to someone, some people, or some nation, only to find out, in the end, that the other party will not honor the surrender. Those to whom we surrender in this life, are not inclined to be honorable or gracious in nature.

GOD WILL ACCEPT OUR SURRENDER

When we surrender all that we have unto the Lord, He will, without fail, accept our surrender, and will deal with us justly. Of a truth, it is well documented, that, in the matter of the keeping of our souls and lives, we can have every confidence that God will accept our surrender, and He will forever honor the unconditional keeping of our souls.

I have already made reference to the Old Testament saint, Abraham. Remember how he was willing to (and actually did) offer up his own son Isaac? Well, when the God of Abraham witnessed Abraham's unconditional surrender unto Himself; then the God of Abraham was gracious and merciful to Abraham and to Isaac. We read about God's acceptance of Abraham's surrender in Genesis 22:15-19: **"And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba."**

I want all of us to understand that our God is far mightier than King Benhadad, or any other person or king that has ever lived on the face of this earth. It is a normal thing, and it is a nearly daily occurrence, in the time of war, that some man or men or nation, will surrender unto some other man or men or nation. But, in the case of our mortal lives and our immortal souls, the God of Heaven and earth, is the Person, unto Whom we should be absolutely surrendered. And, He is honorable in all, and will do us justice when we surrender unto Him.

It is also true, that this One that we surrender our souls and lives unto, will always carefully keep us, and will reward us far beyond that which we deserve. He will, in fact, sustain us after we are committed unto Him. He will not ever reject our surrender---as long as we are

What is the Gospel?

By Raul Enyedi
Bocsa, Romania



The word "Gospel" comes from the Old English "god-spell" and it means "good tale" or "good news." The content of this good news is found in the Scriptures: **"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures"** (Emphasis RE) (I Cor. 15:1-4).

This is the only message that, if believed, opens the gates of Heaven. The Gospel does not speak about the works of the saints, church rituals or the importance of the church in your salvation. The Gospel does not tell you what works you must do in order to be saved. The Gospel tells you about Jesus, because in no one else will you find salvation (Acts 4:12). He is the only way! The Gospel tells about what He did for the salvation of men! Since man is unable to save himself or contribute anything to his own salvation, the message of this good news is called **"the gospel of the grace of God"** (Acts 20:24). Grace means a gift or a favor given freely to someone that does not deserve it or cannot earn it. Did you believe the Gospel for the salvation of your soul?

absolutely surrendered unto Him. We read in II Timothy 1:11-12: **"Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."** I know who it is that I have surrendered unto---and I know that He is able to keep me and to care for me, and to love me---far beyond all that I could ever have imagined.

OUR SURRENDER IS NOT UNTO
♦ (Continued on page 228)

Unconditional

(Continued from page 227) ♦

SALVATION, BUT UNTO SERVICE

We can speak of surrendering ourselves unto God in the day of our conversion, and I suppose that there is some merit to this. But, I tend to mostly think of our salvation, and the day of our conversion, as the work of the Lord, and we are only made participants in that salvation through the quickening power of the Holy Spirit.

However, in the duration of our lives of service unto our Lord and King, there truthfully is, the opportunity for us to surrender unconditionally unto the Lord, and to serve Him with a sort of abandonment of the flesh. This should be the attitude and desire of all of us that are saved. We read about this commendable attitude in Romans 6:11-14: **“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”**

I suppose that the Apostle Paul is a good example for us, of a man that did not hold back anything, but did unconditionally surrender to the Lord, his Master. We read about Paul's commitment unto God in Acts 20:24: **“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”** Again, we read what Paul has to say about his surrender unto God in Philippians 3:7-8: **“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.”** Do you “count all things but loss for the” service and cause of Jesus Christ? Or, are there some things, and some parts of you, that you hold back from giving unto God?

Not only did the Apostle Paul give all of himself unto God, but it is even apparent that in his preaching and teaching, Paul did not hold anything back, but did speak the truth and gave all of the gospel and all of the Word of God unto those that he preached unto. We read in Romans 15:19: **“Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have**

fully preached the gospel of Christ.” Further, we read in Philippians 1:7, 17: **“Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.”** Finally, to prove Paul's unabated desire and purpose to fully preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, notice what Paul had to say to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:20, 27: **“And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house. . . For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”**

In his service to the Lord, truly, the Apostle Paul gave all that he had--he did surrender unconditionally to the purpose and the will of God. **“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing”** (II Tim. 4:6-8).

OUR SURRENDER IS NOT DONE GRUDGINGLY, BUT WILLINGLY

Now let's think for a little while concerning the manner of our unconditional surrender unto our God.

When we surrender unto God, it is not as if we have been conquered by a man or a people or a nation to which we will forever be in despicable bondage. No! When we surrender unto God, we are (or should be) unconditionally surrendering unto the One that has unconditionally loved us from before the foundation of the world! As far as I am concerned, I want my love for Him, and my service to Him, and therefore the surrender that I offer Him, to be the greatest and purest and of the highest motive that I can attain unto.

Our surrender unto God should be a surrender that does not hold anything back, in our service to our God. Let's use Ananias and Sapphira as examples, of some that did surrender unto the service of God, but they tried to hold back something unto themselves, so that their surrender unto God was not absolute and unconditional, but was rather a conditional surrender. **“Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and**

laid it at the apostles' feet. But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being party to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as

many as heard these things” (Acts 4:34 - 5:11). In this passage we can notice, first, the willingness of Barnabas and the others to give all that they had to the service of the Lord, and for the good of the people of God. However, in the cases of Ananias and Sapphira, we find that they sought to keep a little something for themselves.

In the beginning of this article we noticed that even wicked king Ahab was willing to part with all of his riches and his possessions in order to demonstrate his unconditional surrender unto King Benhadad. And yet, many Christians are so miserly and so stingy and so lazy that they will not even surrender as much as Ahab was willing to surrender.

CONCLUSION

I want you to notice that the Lord does love a cheerful giver (and this would include a giver of oneself). We read in II Corinthians 9:7: **“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”** As we unconditionally surrender ourselves unto our gracious and merciful God, let us do so with abandon and with joy and with cheerfulness! Let us commit ourselves--both in this life, and in the life to come--unto our Lord and Saviour. And let us gladly give unto Him all that we have, or ever hope to have!



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



What Is Real Repentance?

“And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart” (Gen. 6:6).

In Genesis 6:6 God was about to change His visible procedure toward mankind. This is the first occurrence of the word “repent” in the Bible. The key to the meaning and scope of this word can be discovered in its first usage. God condescends to express Himself after the manner of men. Such expressions must never be understood to reflect upon the immutability of God. The language about God repenting is figurative, for the Eternal Mind is never changed by any human event. **“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent”** (Num. 23:19).

“Now by carefully noting the setting of this word in Genesis 6:6 and attentively observing what follows, we discover: first, that the occasion of repentance is sin, for in Genesis 6:5 we read that **‘GOD saw**

that the wickedness of man was great in the earth’: thus repentance is a realization of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Second, that the nature of repentance consists in a change of mind; a new decision is formed in view of the deplorable conditions existing--**‘it repented the LORD that he had made man.’** Third, that genuine repentance is accompanied by a real sorrow for sin, for that which necessitated the change of mind: **‘and it grieved him at his heart’** ---cf. II Cor. 7:10. Fourth, that the fruit or consequence of repentance appears in a determination to undo (forsake, and rectify as far as possible) that which is sorrowed over: **‘and the LORD said, I will destroy man’** (v. 7). All of these elements are found in a repentance which has been produced in the heart by the gracious and supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit” (REPENTANCE, A. W.

♦ (Continued on page 229)

Real Repentance

(Continued from page 228) ♦

Pink, p. 5).

REPENTANCE IS MISSING

The word "repentance" was better understood in Old and New Testament times than it is today. In these times of great confusion in doctrinal matters repentance is given a variety of conflicting meanings. The word faith is better understood by the average churchgoer than the word repentance, for faith is often stressed to the neglect of the doctrine of repentance.

The missing note in modern day preaching is repentance. Evangelists and pastors are neglecting to tell sinners that God requires repentance before pardon. In this generation men with captivating personalities are beguiling unstable souls with a form of decisionism that is "another gospel." Missionaries, evangelists, pastors and church literature are forgetting to emphasize this fundamental, indispensable foundation stone of the gospel. Ultra-dispensationalists now affirm repentance is not in this dispensation essential to salvation. Such men are blind leaders of the blind.

Thousands of depraved sinners imagine they can continue in a life of sin while adding Jesus as a personal Hell insurance for the world to come. Our churches are filled with professing Christians who have never repented; yea, who do not even know what repentance really is! Religious people must be taught that no sinner is pardoned while he is impenitent. The Scriptures know nothing of such a grotesque creature as one who is saved but unrepentant!

In an attempt to cover their sloppy evangelism, religious leaders have invented some new terms to explain the worldly lives of their church members. They speak of "carnal Christians" and the need of "the second blessing." They refer to some who they say know Christ as Saviour but not as Lord. The lack of preaching repentance has made cold, heartless and formal churches which have nothing to offer the lost world.

WHAT REPENTANCE IS NOT

Repentance is not penance as Catholics teach and translate the Word in their Douay Bible. Penance can never affect true repentance. It can only be a hindrance to the soul's abandonment of sin. Penance is external self-torture of the body, while repentance is a torture of the mind. Penance diverts attention from the real inward need of the spirit of man. It is exercised toward a false church rather than God.

Confessing your sins to a human priest is not repentance. Going forward to an altar or mourner's bench is not Bible repentance. Millions believe this is what repentance is, but they are sadly mistaken.

Pharaoh confessed his sin, but he never did repent. It is written in Exodus 9:27:

"and Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked."

Being "almost persuaded" is not Bible repentance. A truly penitent person is altogether persuaded to be a Christian. King Agrippa was almost persuaded to be a Christian (Acts 26:28), but he is never said to have repented. The demons believe and tremble, but they never repent (Jas. 2:19). Felix trembled under Paul's preaching (Acts 24:25), but he never repented of his unrighteousness. Many sermons have moved strong men to reason of judgment who are in Hell today.

Repentance is not sorrow for sins as the price of salvation. Real repentance does involve a sorrow for sin, but it is a godly sorrow. There is nothing meritorious about repentance, but rather the consciousness of lack of merit. In repentance the sinner says in effect: "Nothing in my hands I bring. Simply to Thy cross I cling."

It is assumed in many circles if a person sheds tears over his wicked life that he has repented. But no one merits Heaven by his tears, nor does sorrow for sin atone for sin and purchase the favor of God. Esau **"found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears"** (Heb. 12:17). Men weep in the fire of Hell but they do not repent!

Evangelical repentance is not sorrow on account of the consequences of sins committed. This is legal repentance. This kind of repentance is nothing but dread of judgment and punishment. Such people are not sorry they have sinned, but they are sorry that they got caught in the act of sin. They regret justice will not leave them at liberty to sin. Such was Cain's repentance. After the murder of his brother Abel, he said: **"My punishment is greater than I can bear"** (Gen. 4:13).

Legal repentance is a work of the law upon the conscience of man. This legal confliction wears off and nothing spiritual comes of it. The Bible calls this **"the sorrow of the world"** which **"worketh death"** (II Cor. 7:10). Judas is an example of this kind of repentance. **"Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. . . and departed, and went and hanged himself"** (Matt. 27:3-5).

True repentance is not external reformation of life. Reformation follows true repentance yet we must never confuse the two. It is the fruit, not the root. A man may reform his life without repenting of his sins to God. It is written in Jeremiah 3:10: **"Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD."** The Pharisees outwardly appeared righteous unto men, but within they were full of iniquity (Matt. 23:28). It is possible for a person to sweep and garnish

his life and still be full of demons (Matt. 12:43-45). A washed sow will return to her wallowing in the mire (II Pet. 2:22).

WHAT REPENTANCE REALLY IS

Two Hebrew words are translated repent in the Old Testament. These are "nacham," the most common, and "shub," used a few times. "Nacham" means "to be penitent, comforted, eased," while "shub" means "to turn back."

In the New Testament there are two words used which are translated repent and repentance. They are "metamelomai" and "metanoeo." The first means "to be careful or concerned with," and the second means "to have another mind."

J. P. Boyce says on the word repentance that it "means to reconsider, to perceive afterward, and hence to change one's view, mind, or purpose, or even judgment, implying disapproval and abandonment of past opinions and purposes, and the adoption of others which are different. . . . It is seen that it involves a change in the outward life because such a change of view as to the nature of sin and of holiness must be accompanied by regret and sorrow as to the past acts of sin" (ABSTRACT OF THEOLOGY, p. 383).

C. D. Cole wrote: "Etymologically, repentance means a change of mind. The English word comes from a compound Greek word: 'metanoeo.' The Greek noun 'nous' means 'mind.' The Greek verb 'noeo' tells what the mind does: it thinks or considers. Then the Greek preposition 'meta,' when connected with the verb 'noeo' expresses the idea of a change. And so 'matanoeo' (repentance) means to consider the past, to think back and change the mind. It is afterthought as opposed to forethought. In repentance the sinner is occupied with his past record before God" (DEFINITIONS OF BIBLE DOCTRINE, Vol. III, p. 76).

There is a good illustration of repentance presented to the reader of the Bible in Matthew 21:28-29. The passage reads: **"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went."**

Here repentance is seen to be a change of mind which results in a change of conduct. It involves a change in the outward life because such a change is a result of the change of inward opinions. The learned John Gill wrote: "It is a change of mind for the better, and which produces change of action and conduct" (BODY OF DIVINITY, p. 714). Then we must conclude that repentance is a radical change of mind, and it results in sorrow for past sins and a resolve of amendment of life.

I am aware that it is a popular Baptist teaching that repentance has nothing to do with sin. With this I cannot agree, for nobody but a sinner can repent and there is nothing to repent of but sin! The Scriptures make it plain that repentance is

from sin. **"No man repented him of his wickedness"** (Jer. 8:6). **"Repent therefore of this thy wickedness"** (Acts 8:22). Paul condemned the Corinthians who he said had **"not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed"** (II Cor. 12:21). It is written of the beast worshippers in Revelation 9:21 that **"Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."** Those who cannot see from these verses that a sinner needs to repent of his sins needs to visit an eye doctor.

True repentance is said to be toward God, not toward Hell. Acts 20:21 speaks of **"repentance toward God."** Sin separates the sinner from God. Apart from the grace of repentance, man would wander farther and farther from God into a state of endless separation from Him. In evangelical repentance the sinner looks toward God whose law he has broken and moves toward Him by the operation of grace. The wicked man **"forsake(s) his way"** and **"his thoughts"** and turns to the Lord (Isa. 55:7).

Repentance is toward God because it sees Him as the party dishonored by sin. It is directed toward Him as the great Lawgiver. In God the Father lies expressed the idea of the strict righteousness to which repentance directs itself. Repentance is toward God and faith is in Jesus Christ.

The Bible expresses repentance by a broken spirit. The psalmist declared: **"I am feeble and sore broken"** (Ps. 38:8). The Scripture says: **"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit"** (Ps. 34:18). Those who are brought by repentance to see their spiritual poverty have a broken heart and God has promised to "heal the broken heart" (Ps. 147:3).

Man by nature has a hard heart. He is the victim of **"hardness"** and an **"impenitent heart"** (Rom. 2:5). The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to break the sinner's heart and bring him to repentance. **"Is not my word like as fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"** (Jer. 23:29). God brought the men of Nineveh to repentance by the preaching of Jonah (Matt. 12:41). The Lord has promised: **"but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word"** (Isa. 66:2).

In the Scriptures repentance is a recovery from a state of spiritual insanity. The impenitent man is not in his right mind. Ecclesiastes 9:3 says: **"The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead."** The heart of the natural man is foolish and darkened. He is without spiritual understanding. Every act of sin is madness. In repentance the sinner comes to himself (Luke 15:17) and then has **"his right mind"** (Mark 5:15). Before Paul

♦ (Continued on page 230)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. How many crowns can a saint be given in Heaven?

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I believe that crowns are rewards that are handed out at the Bema or Judgment seat of Christ. The crowns that are specifically named in the New Testament are as follows:

1. A crown of rejoicing (I Thess. 2:19) given for being a faithful witness and sharing the Gospel of Christ with others.

2. A crown of righteousness (II Tim. 4:8) for faithfully preparing and watching for the coming of the Lord.

3. A crown of glory (I Pet. 5:4) given to faithful pastors who have fed and led the Lord's church with pure motives.

4. A crown of life (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10) given to those who have faithfully endured trials of their faith and proven their unwavering love for the Lord. The crown of life in Revelation appears to be given specifically to those who have been martyred in the service of Christ.

These crowns are earned by faithfully serving the Lord in this life. Whether saints will receive other crowns not specifically named in Scripture remains a mystery. Jesus warned: **"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown"** (Rev. 3:11) implying that crowns may be lost through unwatchfulness. The ultimate act of worship will be when the saints of God throw their crowns at the feet of the Lord, who loved them and gave Himself for them (Rev. 4:10-11).

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I don't know of any definitive answer to this question. It would be an exercise in futility to try to list all the rewards which await the faithful servant of God, but if we are serving for reward, or counting crowns, I suggest we are serving for the wrong reason and not really a whole lot different than those who are more interested in their "evangelism report" than in the final glory of God.

"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" (I Cor. 4:5).

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How many crowns can a Saint be given in Heaven? That is a good question. I don't know other than what has, by His determinant council, been predetermined for the saint to have.

We are given some insight into at least five crowns that I know of. Few will receive all five, but all will receive at least one. I pray that I will be found faithful to God's Word in this matter.

1. **"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing"** (II Tim. 4:8). This crown is for those who **"..love His appearing."** May God find us looking for His dear Son when He appears in the clouds to rapture us out of this world.

2. **"And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible"** (I Cor. 9:25). The incorruptible crown is given to those who **"..keep under my body"** (vs. 27). What we do with our bodies is very important. The Elect are not to indulge in the lusts of the flesh to waste the body in any way, but to control or keep under our body.

3. **"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him"** (James 1:12)(also read Revelation 2:10). This crown is the crown martyrs will receive at the Bema for their faithfulness to the faith of Christ Jesus unto death.

4. **"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"** (I Thess. 2:19). The crown of rejoicing are the Elect of God that have been saved under the preaching or the witnessing of soul winners.

5. **"And when the chief Shepherd**

shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Pet. 5:4). The Pastor's crown given to those "pastors" that neither lord over God's heritage or are for, **"filthy lucre's sake"** (Titus 1:11), occupying the office.

That's all I know of. If there are more I pray God will reveal them to me by His Holy Spirit.

MIKE DEWITT



Real Repentance

(Continued from page 229) ♦

repented he "did many things ignorantly in unbelief" (I Tim. 1:13).

THE IMPORTANCE OF IT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

John the Baptist began his ministry by preaching repentance. In the wilderness of Judaea there went forth the cry: **"Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"** (Matt. 3:2,11). Paul said of John: **"John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus"** (Acts 19:4).

The first text of Jesus Christ was repentance. In Mark 1:15 He declared: **"Repent ye, and believe the gospel."** His whole ministry on earth is stated in Luke 5:32: **"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."** Christ declared the good tidings of great joy that men would be pardoned of sin upon repentance. He spoke of joy in Heaven over one sinner that repented (Luke 15:7). Like John the Baptist, Jesus Christ was a preacher of repentance.

After organizing His church during His personal ministry on earth, Jesus Christ commissioned His church to preach repentance to all nations. Luke is the only writer who gives us the doctrinal content of the great commission. Christ said to His church **"that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"** (Luke 24:47).

In substance He told the church: "Go and tell a guilty world that stands condemned at God's bar that all who repent and believe shall be pardoned of sin." Observe that Christ joined repentance with remission of sins. Without the preaching of repentance, there can be no forgiveness of sins!

The early church took these words of Christ seriously and acted upon them. The early churches majored upon repentance. It is said of the twelve apostles that **"they went out, and preached that men should repent"** (Mark 6:12).

On the day of Pentecost when Peter preached to the multitude, they cried out: **"Men and brethren, what shall we do?"** Peter was no hyper-Calvinist. He did not say, "Be passive, there is nothing you can do." He did not say, "Believe your sins are

blotted out and join the church." No, his reply was: **"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"** (Acts 2:38).

Peter did not change his message for later in chapter 3 of Acts he preached: **"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord"** (Acts 3:19).

When Paul preached on Mars' Hill he cried: **"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent"** (Acts 17:30). Paul, describing his ministry to King Agrippa, told how he had gone **"throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles"** calling upon men to **"repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance"** (Acts 26:20). Paul told the elders at Ephesus that he had testified **"both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Acts 20:21).

The Jerusalem church rejoiced when they heard that God had granted unto the Gentiles repentance unto life (Acts 11:18).

CONCLUSION

The Bible mentions one man who went to Hell before he discovered God commanded all men to repent of sin. The rich man in Hell said: **"Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent"** (Luke 16:30). He realized that his five brothers on earth needed to repent in order to escape the fire of Hell.

Those who do not repent will perish in Hell as the rich man did. There is no forgiveness of sin apart from repentance. Have you repented?

*How oft, alas! this wretched heart
Has wander'd from the Lord!
How oft my roving thoughts depart,
Forgetful of His Word!*

*Yet sovereign mercy calls, "Return;"
Dear Lord, and may I come!
My vile ingratitude I mourn:
Oh, take the wanderer home!*

*And canst thou, wilt thou, yet forgive,
And bid my crimes remove?
And shall a pardon'd rebel live
To speak thy wondrous love?*

*Almighty grace, thy healing power,
How glorious, how divine!
That can to life and bliss restore
So vile a heart as mine.*

*Thy pardoning love, so free, so sweet,
Dear Saviour, I adore;
Oh, keep me at thy sacred feet,
And let me rove no more!*



The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Is it possible for a person to be saved without knowing they are saved?

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"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:13).

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16).

Scripture and the inner witness of the Holy Spirit should make it plain to a saved person that they are saved. There may often be periods of doubt brought on by various events, attitudes, and even known sin in a person's life, but even these are evidences of his salvation. The true saint of God does not rely on a note in the flyleaf of his Bible or a pronouncement by the evangelist or pastor. He knows he is saved because of that witness spoken of in Romans 8:16 above, by the fruit of the Spirit in his life, and even by the chastising from the hand of God (**"But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons"** (Heb. 12:8).

I think it far more likely that a person may think himself saved when he is not saved. These would be those whose lives show no spiritual fruit, in love, grace, behavior. Many will have labored in deeds they think are service, but which are done in duty, legalism or humanistic pride rather than sincerity of heart and commitment. **"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"** (Matt. 7:21-13). They have sought their own glory instead of God's glory. They have done the works in their name, not in Christ's name. **"For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward"** (Mark 9:41, emphasis mine).

Dr. W. R. Crews wrote a 43 page booklet entitled "Is A Person Saved Who

Doesn't Remember The Experience?" in which he addresses the other side of this same coin. (I don't know if copies are still available or where to get any but I will scan and make copies on request if funds are available for me to do so.) But the question seems to spring from an over emphasis in the sovereignty of God in salvation to the point that neither evangelist nor convert dare trust their own faith or commitment.

I was on a missionary tour in New England a number of years ago when the host pastor made sure I was hosted by a family that had doubts about their salvation. They were afraid, and had been taught, that their act of faith believing was works, so they feared they could not know if they were saved until they got to Heaven, if they ever did.

How sad, and what an abuse of the doctrines of grace!

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I John 5:10-13 declares: **"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."**

This passage of Scripture is crystal clear in attesting to the fact that saved people definitely know that they are saved. They have been given spiritual life created by the Holy Spirit in regeneration. They have exercised the gift of saving faith. They have believed the record of the Gospel of Christ. They are said to have eternal life in their possession the moment they believe. Finally, they know they have eternal life in Christ.

From Scripture as well as personal experience I could not entertain the idea that a person could be saved and not know it. The day that I was saved by God's grace was the most momentous day of my life. The love of God was

shed abroad in my heart (Rom. 5:5). I was translated out of the darkness and deadness of sin into the glorious light of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:13; II Cor. 4:6; I Pet. 2:9). I was forever changed by the power of God (II Cor. 5:17). I experienced the grace of full forgiveness through faith in Christ's blood (Eph. 1:7).

In light of all the above, no, I don't think a person could be saved and not know it. Salvation is real! It is a miracle of sovereign grace when the elect receive and experience it. Romans 8:9-10 declares: **"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."**

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I will say that there is no way that someone could be saved and not know it. I say this with absolute confidence because God's Word tells us so.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16).

"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (I John 4:13).

"And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (I John 3:24).

These are but a few verses of assurance to the believer that they "Know" they are the Children of God. He has given us His Word so that we may have comfort in His love.

MIKE DEWITT



Salvation is Free

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characters in our text besides the Lord, Simon the Pharisee and this woman. One was a very religious and moral man and the other was a very irreligious and notorious woman. Both were sinners and both needed to be saved by the grace of God through faith in His only begotten Son. If you gain nothing else from this message today, glean this: all men, women, boys, and girls, no matter how religious or irreligious, no matter how moral or immoral, no matter how good or bad in the eyes of others – all are sinners and all must be saved the same way, by faith

in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for sin, or they will all die in sin and suffer the eternal punishment of a righteous and holy God. **"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"** (Acts 4:12).

Let us remember that a parable is a story used to illustrate and to teach some particular truth by way of comparison. So then let us ask the question, "What was Jesus seeking to illustrate or teach?"; and by diligent attention to the Scriptures, let us not only ask the question, but let us also obtain the answer.

The first thing that Jesus illustrates in this parable is the reality of sin and the guilt of sinners before God. **"There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both."**

This man to whom Jesus was directly speaking who was a Pharisee, a very devout and religious person, had become upset because of the woman who had come in and was washing the feet of Jesus with her tears. We note his thoughts: **"This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner."** Simon was a very self-righteous person. What we note is that Jesus never once denied the fact that this woman was a sinner. In fact, the Word of God says she was a sinner. **"And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner . . ."** Everyone in the city knew she was a sinner, because her sin was such that it had made her infamous. What Simon and some of these others that were in his house with him needed to know was that not only was this woman a sinner, but all men, women, boys, and girls are sinners and need to be forgiven of their sins; and the only One who has power to forgive sins is Jesus.

In the parable which Jesus told, there were two debtors. They did not each owe the same amount, but they were both debtors and neither one was able to pay what he owed. This is exactly the case with everyone who is outside of Christ today. They are debtors before God, having broken His law, transgressed His commandments, and disobeyed His precepts. In our natural state, we like to think that others are sinners but we are somehow not included in that category. **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"** (Rom. 3:23; cf. Rom. 5:12). Beloved, you are a sinner, and you started sinning the moment you entered this world. Sin may be manifested in our outward actions, but it comes from within, from the heart. **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"** (Jer. 17:9). **"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother**

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conceive me" (Ps. 51:5). **"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies"** (Ps. 58:3). All descended from Adam, who brought sin into the world by a single transgression; and all have inherited his sin-corrupted nature, and are thereby the willful practicers of sin. The only thing that restrains people from plunging themselves into the deepest and darkest pits of sin and depravity is the grace and mercy of God.

All men have not sinned the same sins. All men have not sinned the same amount of sins. That is clearly illustrated in the parable which Jesus taught: one debtor owed five hundred pence, and the other owed fifty. Yet, they both were in debt and they both owed more than they could pay. The woman who came in and washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, and wiped His feet with her hair, and anointed His feet with oil, and would not cease to kiss His feet, was herself a very great sinner. She had sinned much, and that is not ever called into question. She needed Jesus Christ to save her and forgive her of her sins and to cleanse her from all unrighteousness by washing her in His pure and precious blood. There are many who commit very grievous sins, murder, fornication, theft, and many other such things; and these all need the free gift of salvation that is found only in Christ. These, however, who owe, as it were, five hundred pence, are no more in need of the Savior than those whose sins are less grievous and yet they themselves are still unable to pay. No man is able to pay his sin debt! No woman is able to pay her sin debt! No boy, no girl – no one can clear themselves from the debt of sin, because all have fallen short of the glory of God!

"There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:1-5). The truth of the gospel message is that all are sinners and stand condemned before God. The verdict has already been announced – guilty as charged! **"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"** (John 3:18). The two debtors in the parable in our text may not have had

the same amount of debt, and all may not have committed the same depth of sin; but both men owed more than they could pay, and all of us have nothing with which we may pay our sin debt unto God.

There are ways in which sinners try to escape their sin debt. Some simply deny their sin debt or try to avoid it. This man named Simon who was a Pharisee thought that he had escaped his sin debt because of his religion. He was very religious and lived a moral life, especially when compared to this sinful woman. Many people today think that because they have a self-righteousness in that they were brought up in a certain religion, or have always attended church, or are members in a church, or have not committed what they consider to be grievous sins, then they do not need to repent and trust in Christ. Many today are trusting in their own works. Yet the Scriptures are very clear, **"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt"** (Rom. 4:4). Trust in your baptism, your religious upbringing, your faithfulness to some manner of religion – it is all some kind of works, and it is all reckoned of debt, and the debt is such that you cannot pay it. The Bible says God doesn't want your self-righteous works because they are contaminated with sin and they are disgusting in His sight. **"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags"** (Isa. 64:6).

Beloved, I myself was "rocked in the Baptist cradle," having been brought up by godly, God-fearing parents. I was taken to church regularly, more so than most. I was taught to memorize the Scriptures. God preserved me from many heinous sins by His grace working in the lives of my parents. I didn't drink, I didn't commit murders, and I didn't do many of the things that we look down our noses at other people for and call them sinners. Nevertheless, I was a guilty sinner, condemned before God, on the road to hell; and unless God ministered His amazing grace to me that I might exercise the gifts of repentance and faith and see that I was a debtor to God with nothing to pay and lean only upon Jesus for salvation, I would have perished and gone to a hell prepared for the devil and his angels, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched! (Read Rom. 3:10-18.) People hear these words and read these verses, and they say within themselves, "That must be talking about someone else." No, that's talking about you and me and every other human being ever born of Adam's race: and until you see that you are a debtor to God, no matter the "amount," and repent and trust Christ you'll die in your sins and be forever separated from God.

The *second thing* that we note in this parable is that *God forgives sinners freely*. There are some things that we do not read. We do not read that the creditor

forgot that these two were in debt to him. A lot of people seem to think that God just overlooks sin. The truth is that God hates sin and He will one day punish all workers of iniquity. Something else which we do not read is that the debtors struck a deal with their creditor. Many would like to think that they have some sort of deal worked out with God or that they will one day swing some kind of deal with God, so to speak, and in that manner escape the guilt of their sins. We do not read of any such things taking place. We do not read of the debtors being told they could work off the debt, or that they would be put in prison for so long a time until the debt was paid. What we do read is that **"when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both."** An amplification of this verse reads as follows: **"When they had no means of paying, he freely forgave them both"** (*Amplified New Testament*, Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, Ltd., 1968).

When a sinner is forgiven of God, God does so freely and fully. **"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life"** (Tit. 3:3-7). This creditor wrote off the debts of these two as though they had never existed; and they were free and clear of all that they had owed. When God forgives sinners who repent and trust in Christ, He says, **"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more"** (Heb. 10:17). The debtors were fully and completely discharged from their debt, and those whom God saves are fully and completely discharged from their sin debt before God. God never recalls the debt or says that we owe Him for the payment of our sins. Neither is one sinner forgiven more fully or completely than another. Regardless of the amount of the debt, the debtor is freely forgiven by God in salvation.

Let me emphasize that it is God Who does the forgiving. No human being, whether designated some kind of priest or other religious authority by some denomination or religious order can forgive lost sinners of their sins. Only Jesus can forgive people of their sins. **"And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven."** This upset a lot of people. (Read Luke 5:18-25.) Jesus is the only One who can discharge us from our sin debt. No church, no human being, only the Godman, Jesus Christ has this authority and this power; to free sinners from the clutches and

the bondage of their sins. The message of Jesus, the message of the gospel, is the message of release for sinners from their sin debt through faith in His shed blood. **"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord"** (Luke 4:18,19).

Thirdly, let us note *the specifics of this forgiveness*. Jesus said, **"And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both."** These debtors had been in debt, but it was when they found that they had nothing to pay that they were forgiven. People are searching for ways to pay off their sins, but they will never be saved until they come to the end of their ways and see that they have nothing to pay and cry out unto God for forgiveness and life. (Read Luke 18:9-14.) This woman who came and washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, she knew that she was a sinner and she came to the end of her own ways and came to the Saviour for forgiveness. Sinners are in bondage before they come to Christ; but they won't come until God opens their eyes and they behold their condition and see that Jesus is their only means of deliverance. The prodigal son was starving and hungry for a long time before his eyes were finally opened to his pitiful and desperate condition. **"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"** (Luke 15:17). A sinner won't come to Christ for forgiveness until they see their need of Him and their own inability to pay their sin debt.

Dear reader, you will know the reality of sin before you ever are saved. The problem with so many today who claim to be children of God is that they have never repented because they never acknowledged their debt of sin before the Lord. **"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death"** (II Cor. 7:10). Many people are sorry that they got caught, or sorry that their circumstances are the way they are; but they do not feel the weight of their sin bearing down upon them and do not realize that their sins were what nailed Jesus to the tree of Calvary! If you don't believe that Jesus died for your sins, and that He paid your sin debt else you would be doomed to hell, then you had better do some serious soul and Scripture searching before God lest you leave this place lost and undone and still bearing your own sin debt.

There is only one way to receive this frank, free, and full salvation, and that is by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. **"And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved**

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thee; go in peace." "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). How is it that the debtor can be cleared of his or her debt before God? How is it that one who was guilty can now be considered justified, cleared of guilt, and have peace with God where once there was enmity? This can only be had by believing in the One who died for sin, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9). The woman in our text who was such a notorious sinner came to the right Person for forgiveness; and if you will have forgiveness of sins, you, too, must come to Christ.

God can forgive sinners who come by faith in Jesus because Jesus paid their sin debt Himself. God does not merely overlook sin. So many think that God will just pay no attention to their sins. The only reason God will ever clear you of sin is because you have believed on Him Who paid the debt for lost sinners, Who shall save His people from their sins, the Lord Jesus Christ. "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:13,14). Because Jesus did this, He is able to invite sinners who are laboring hard under the load of their sin debt and are never able to be clear of it to come to Him for deliverance and release. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

Do you know how you can tell if someone has been forgiven of their sins by God? They will love Jesus Christ. This woman had a great affection toward the Lord because of what He had done for her. A sinner is held prisoner by their sins, whether he or she has sinned little or much, until Jesus sets that person at liberty. When Jesus grants a person forgiveness, it is just as much forgiveness as any other whom He has saved, equal in effect. Do you want liberty from your sins? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). Salvation is only available by the free grace of God.

The Revival Needed Among Baptists

By H. B. Taylor
(1870 - 1932)

"For by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20).

"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31).

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24).

"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (John 16:8-11).

Why do conversions not last? The Bible says: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Conversions that are made by death bed stories, or experience, or preaching love, or preaching law, or any one of many other appeals in evangelistic meetings do not last because the only true and abiding foundation for lasting conversions is the Word of God. If you want your converts to last, cut out everything but the Book and preach it. Funny stories and tearful appeals and worldly motives and jazz, or raggy, or sensual music do not produce lasting conversions. I do not know a single preacher, who is hail-fellow, well-met with all kinds of worldly organizations, whose converts last. The Bible says, "Friendship of the world is enmity with God" (James 4:4). How can a preacher be the friend of a worldly, godless crowd and then be God's friend come Sunday? He can't. He is no friend of God's. He is a friend of the world. His converts do not last because they are not genuine. He may be a blind leader of the blind and all of them land in the ditch. If he himself is saved however, his converts in the day when his works are tested by fire, will be wood, hay or stubble and he himself will be saved, yet so as by fire. Poor fellow! What will all his popularity and money be worth to him then? Bushels of tears will be shed then over his shoddy methods and his spurious converts. What is the matter with his work?

1. His preaching was not the kind to save anybody.

If he preached love, that will not save. If he preached law, that will not save. If he preached morality that will not save. If he preached baptism and church-membership, that will not save. The great book in the Bible on how sinners are saved is the Gospel of John. The great Book in the Bible, that shows how the men taught by Jesus during His earthly ministry, put in practice the Gospel of John after His resurrection and



ascension is the Book of Acts. These are two words for love in the New Testament, namely, phileo and agapao. Neither of them is found in the Book of Acts. There are many sermons in Acts.

It covers a period of 33 years. If that spells anything at all, that means that the Holy Spirit did not direct them to preach on love and they did not do it. These preachers did speak of the law, but always with a warning, that by works of law will no flesh be justified before God. Men are not saved by preaching law nor by preaching love. That is not the kind of preaching that saves. Neither does political preaching save, nor social preaching, nor educational preaching, nor preaching morality. Paul says: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2). That is the preaching that saves. No other kind does. Law has to be preached to awaken the lost and self-righteous: but law does not save anybody. The first thing necessary if we have genuine conversions is the right kind of preaching. Preaching law or love will not save anybody. More about that later. We have to have the right kind of preaching, if conversions are to be genuine.

2. Defective conviction will not save anybody.

There are three kinds of conviction spoken of in the New Testament. First, conviction wrought by conscience (Rom. 2:15). All men have that, even the heathen. That is the ground of the damnation of the heathen. Their consciences convict them and will be witnesses against them in the judgment. Second, legal conviction. "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). That is the kind that makes sinners tremble. But the law and legal conviction, it matters not how deep and pungent they may be, do not save anybody. They may lead to remorse at getting caught up with. They may lead to reformation and tears and profession as in the stony ground hearer and even some joy (Matt. 13:20-21); but he was not saved. Legal repentance does not lead to salvation, if that is all. If the preaching is emotional or hortatory, without any teaching, the profession will be spurious and will not last. "The law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ" (Rom. 3:20). If the ministry is a teaching ministry and the law has a chance as a tutor to lead the sinner to Christ, then conversion will be genuine and only then. Then, there is the third kind of conviction, namely, evangelical conviction. That is the only kind that leads to salvation. Evangelical conviction is produced by the preaching of Christ. The only sin the Holy Spirit convicts

of (John 16:8-11) is the sin of rejecting Jesus as Saviour and Lord. J. W. Gillon said in the Murray meeting that 75 per cent of the church members of this country are not saved. He is probably right about it. They have legal conviction: but nobody presents the Lord Jesus to them: the Holy Spirit has nothing to work on because Christ has not been upheld. Many such profess and join the church, but they are not saved, because Christ and His finished work were not presented to them. The noisy convictions are nearly always legal. The Holy Spirit is very quiet in His work. His convictions are deep: His voice is a still small voice. He reveals Christ as Saviour; as our righteousness; and as the One, Who took our sins upon Himself, when we acknowledged the justice of God's judgment against sin and that it is worthy of death. Evangelical conviction has to do wholly with our need of Christ and His finished work. Preaching law doesn't save because it gives the Holy Spirit no chance to reveal Christ. Preaching love doesn't save for the love that is preached is sensual and earthly and doesn't make anybody love Christ. It is self-pitying and carnal. Preaching Christ saves: no other kind does. That kind of conversion lasts.

3. Defective repentance does not save anybody.

Paul tells us in II Corinthians 7:10 that godly sorrow worketh repentance but the sorrow of the world works death. The sorrow of the world is the sorrow that is wrought by death-bed stories or fear of Hell or getting caught up with it is towards self: it is self-pitying; it is man-wrought. Godly sorrow is God-wrought: God-ward: leads to the confession and forsaking of sin: and fruits in a radical change of mind that is never repented of. There are generally more tears in the sorrow of the world than a godly sorrow: because that crowd bores to tears. Those, who preach Christ do not. But note again. Peter said that Jesus was exalted to give repentance. Death-bed stories do not give repentance: preaching law does not work repentance: sob-stuff does not produce repentance. Preaching love works sob-stuff and both the sob-stuff and the love that produces it, are of the earth, earthly. Preaching law does not work repentance. There is just one thing, only one thing, that works repentance. That is the uplifting and exalting of Jesus Christ. When men preach Jesus, that produces evangelical conviction, which is conviction as to the need of Christ and the worth of His finished work as the only ground of a sinner's acceptance with God. Let me say it once more. Evangelical conviction is produced by the preaching of Christ; the exalting of Christ gives repentance and repentance always fruits in a personal trust in Christ the Lord as the only Saviour, Who has never yet lost a single soul, who received Him.

That kind of conversion always last forever.

(News and Truths, Dec. 12, 1928)



Yes, Virginia, There Is A Santa

By Roy W. Snell

Whether the story be fact or fiction there was an article carried in the local newspapers some few years back, concerning a young girl who supposedly had inquired as to the existence of a character designated as Santa Claus. Her concern and query were made public and some journalist/writer took it upon himself to reassure the child that such an one was a reality. Obviously this gentleman was a bleeding-heart humanist, more interested in public opinion and acceptance than he was in purveying the truth---so with much milk-sop tenderness, pathos and pathetic fallacy he proceeded to further enhance and to elaborate upon a flagrant lie. And this to mesmerize and delude an innocent, impressionable and tender hearted child.

As a human interest story this man's argumental premise was prepared and delivered in an appealing (to the flesh) manner, so as to tug at the tender sensibilities of the most callus and adamant Scrooge in our midst. And judging by the antics of many of our Baptists around the advent of the mid-winter solstice, they, too, must have been moved and influenced by the gentleman's presentation and defense of that lie called Santa.

Beloved, this supposedly benign old man with the ruddy cheeks and white beard is part and parcel of a season known as the Xmas (yes I spelled it correctly) holidays---and no discerning, perceptive, knowledgeable Bible student among our Baptists should accept or embrace one iota of any religious observance or practice which involves or includes a "mass." This fact alone should serve to warn and alert that Bible-believing elect child of God.

I know something of human nature--and I know my Baptists, so I can expect some curled lips, some mocking, and some scoffing at that which I have just written. So bear with me as I now reveal something more sinister and dangerous in our honoring and revering this Santa. Now I fully agree with the title to my article. "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa." Surprised? The only difficulty or problem we encounter here is that his name is misspelled. Instead of Santa it actually should be spelled S-a-t-a-n. Now I have put the fat in the fire. If I cannot build a plausible and credible case for my statement then I will look very foolish indeed. So bear with me once more.

That old serpent who is "more subtil" in Genesis 3:1 is synonymous with Lucifer and with the devil. So know your enemy. In any form this is a created being, brought into existence by our Sovereign

Creator.

Being itself (or himself) only a created being he has no power to create any tangible thing on his own. In his pride, jealousy, rage and hatred against our Lord, he now is reduced to imitating and to counterfeiting the things of God, in order to hinder, destroy or to thwart the plans of our Sovereign for His creatures. And for reasons known only to our great God this enemy of our souls yet has certain powers, literally beyond mortal ken.

I warned that this devil is "more subtil" and had he allowed his true identity to be exposed, through the name Satan, then his following would consist of only the radical, unorthodox devil worshippers and benign apparition---and causes him to be called Santa. And the whole country, religious and otherwise does literally worship him at this Xmas season. Wait a moment! How could Satan manage such an acceptable, counterfeit imitation---and that actually of himself? Beloved, if Eve in her innocence could be deceived in the Garden, then this old serpent will not find it difficult to hoodwink even the elect for a season. Power? His emissaries called up frogs in Egypt---a miracle in itself. Study II Thessalonians 2:9. "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (II Cor. 11:14). Then, pray tell, just what has this transformation done to his character in order that he might foist one Santa upon even God's children? Know ye not that one appellation for the devil is Old Nick? Your Romanist peers assisted and located a Saint Nicholas as one and the same with Santa. Wasn't that convenient? How and where does this so-called Santa appear when he visits the earth? He comes from the skies, silly. What of the myriad of letters written to him? How much they resemble the beseeching supplications of a believer's prayer. Why do we tell our young innocents, beginning just after Thanksgiving that they better be "good?" For the simple reason that Santa knows if you have been good or bad. And that he will reward the good and withhold blessings from the bad. Pray tell me Baptists, Who is it that knows everything about us? And Who has the authority to bless or to withhold? Is it Santa, Satan or a sovereign God? Know then that Satan is the father of lies---a liar from the beginning. Then he is the "father" of this one called Santa---and has caused his offspring to appear to possess those holy attributes which are the sole property of God.

This is not directed primarily to the Arminian and the Protestant, however "let him that hath an ear" hear the Word of God.

All of you professing Christians who

heretofore have allowed or encouraged your innocent and impressionable youngsters to embrace this concept of such a monstrosity are actually and actively compounding and propagating that which is clearly a lie. Your Bible says to "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). The obvious lie, even a supposedly innocent one, is not the way the child should go. Study the Book and see for yourself that company in which God places the liar. Paul told young Timothy that the law was made for liars (I Tim. 1:9-10). As a fallible creature, myself out of Adam's loins, I do not sit in judgment. This blessed Book declares that "...the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him. . ." (John 12:48). Then what saith this word? "All liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 21:8). Let that suffice you (Ezek. 44:6).

In summation a pertinent anecdote. An unenlightened young mother, in all human kindness and affection for her little boy, has both allowed and encouraged him to accept this idea of a Santa Claus as a reality. Then one day when the child was a little older he was informed by some of his playmates that there was no Santa---and that his own father had been playing the part of this lie. Obviously hurt and disturbed he hurried home to confront his mother with such a revelation. His mom then decided to come clean with her son and she confessed the lie which she had been promoting. The little fellow listened in open mouthed amazement and then sadly turned away. Then almost immediately he turned again to his mother, asking of her, "Then what about this Jesus?" Yes, Virginia there definitely IS a Santa Claus (Satan). Baptists, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing. . ." (II Cor. 6:17). Beloved, dare ye reject this unscriptural and basically Romish/Babylonia tradition? That which couples and associates an ungodly "mass" with this non-existent creature (Santa Claus) who usurps the attributes of our holy God? The choice is yours.

(Scripture Notes, December 1985)



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SIN

By J. O. Tidwell

What is sin? We turn to the Bible for our answer. It can be described very easily, but it is hard to define. The word "Sin" is mentioned some 700 times in the Bible. Since sin and the effect of sin touches every human life, it is something for our serious consideration. Death is the penalty assessed on the sinner. Sin separates men from fellowship with God and merits the displeasure of Him.

The sin problem is the greatest thing that disturbs man today. When God descends on us and we recognize His Holy Presence, then we can see our sins so plainly that we cry out: "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts" (Isa. 6:5). When we think of God in His Holiness, majesty, grace and power, our self-importance and self-righteousness fade out, so that we exclaim, "I am a sinful man" (Luke 5:8).

What is sin? It is missing the mark. It is lack of conformity to the divine will of God in deed or in desire. The Bible speaks of sin like this:

"The thought of foolishness is sin" (Prov. 24:9).

"To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

"The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

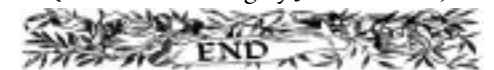
We see the results of sin all about us today---as we look at the different people of the world trying to solve their problems without God. Sin is the most deceptive thing in the world. Sin allures, deceives, is blinding and binding. It is hard to break with sin. God alone can cancel sin and set the sinner free.

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

"The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day,
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away."

(Random Thinking by J. O. Tidwell)



Eternal Life Through Our Lord Jesus Christ

By T. T. Martin
(1870 - 1932)



But God's Word goes further and says, "**Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God**" (I John 5:1).

There cannot be birth without new life. It is not

the old life; that would mean no birth. If then, the new life is not eternal life, what life is it?

If language can be made to mean anything, God's word makes it plain that every redeemed man, every believer on Christ, has "here and now," eternal life for God's Word tells us, not only that "**by grace have ye been saved**" (Eph. 2:8-9, 1911 Bible and R.V.), but it states plainly, "**he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life**" (John 3:36).

"**Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life**" (John 5:24).

That God's Word does not mean that the believer on Christ has simply the "promise" of everlasting life, but that he really has the everlasting life, notice John 5:24, "**Hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed [here and now] from death unto life.**"

The Revised Version (1884, the more exact translation) makes it much stronger, ---"**hath passed out of death into life.**" What life, if not eternal life? Before this plain positive statement of God's Word, the mere promise of eternal life theory cannot stand. But the fact that the believer on Christ really has now eternal life is made plain by other Scriptures.

"**Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him**" (I John 3:15).

Here we are shown that when one "**hath eternal life**" it is "**eternal life abiding in him**"; for there would be no meaning to the language if no one has eternal life abiding in him.

Again, "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life**" (John 6:53-54).

The Saviour had just taught in verse 35 what eating His flesh and drinking His blood meant: "**I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger:**

and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

Here in verses 53, 54, the Saviour shows clearly that the eternal life that the believer on Him "hath" is "in" you--- here and now.

Let the unredeemed reader pause: in a moment, here and now, he can have "everlasting life" with God's assurance that he "**shall never perish**" ("**I give unto**

them eternal life; and they shall never perish" John 10:28).

"**Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life: and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life**" (John 5:24).



To Save By Many or By Few

By Christopher W. Burke Sr.
of Catlettsburg, KY

READ I Samuel 14:1-15

"**And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few**" (I Sam. 14:6).

This is our hope today, as a little flock of God. As one despised by the enemy, and as nothing compared to the big churches in our community. If it were not for this very great and wonderful truth concerning our very great and wonderful God, I might be tempted to faint and to quit. This great and wonderful truth of which I speak is; "**our God is able to save by many or by few.**" First beloved, we want to just say that salvation is not in our power in the first place. Therefore, it really doesn't matter whether we are 20 strong or 2000 strong, or even just 2 believers, as in the case of Jonathan and his armor bearer. Unless the Lord goes before us and saves according to His good pleasure, and by His mighty power, then it doesn't matter how large an army we have. Secondly, our God takes pleasure in doing great things with small things, and with small armies. In this way He gets all the glory. In this way His people must depend on Him to save and to deliver, and not in their own strength and might. In this way His people know that salvation is of the Lord, and not of themselves.

The Lord uses little things to accomplish big things. He used Abraham to build the great nation of Israel. He used Moses and Aaron to deliver Israel out of the hand of Pharaoh and Egypt. He used Gideon and his little army of 300 men to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Midianites. He used Jonathan and his armor bearer in our text to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. He used the 12 apostles to deliver many thousands of souls out of the hand of Satan on the day of Pentecost and in the days following.

We want to notice three points from our text: 1) "**Come, let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised**"; 2) "**It may be that the LORD will work for us**"; and 3) "**There is no restraint unto the LORD to save by many or by**

few."



1. "**Come, let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised.**"

We want to consider this portion of our text in two parts.

First let's notice the phrase;

"**Come let us go over.**"

This statement implies teamwork and cooperation on the part of God's people. There were only two of them, yet they worked together in unity and as a team. I believe that if we would really desire to see the Lord work for us, and save sinners, and build up our church, then we must work together in the unity of the spirit and in cooperation. I don't know if the Lord will bless a church in this way that is not of one mind and of one heart and in one accord. If He did bless a church that was not in unity, it certainly would be in spite of that church.

This statement implies that there was an underlying common cause, which was a great love for their nation and for their God. We preached a message once entitled "Is There not a Cause?" from the story of David and Goliath. Is there not an underlying common cause of our church? Do we not have a love for our church, the Lord's church, to see it prosper and to see it blessed of the Lord? Do we not desire to see our church grow? May God help us to love His church. If we don't love His church and long for, and strive for her prosperity, can we really say that we love Him? Jesus loved His church so much that He died for her. Should not we love her enough to live for her, and serve the Lord through her? Yes, beloved, there is a wonderful cause. And Jesus was pleased by His love and grace to make us a part of His cause.

This statement implies great faith in their God, Who they believed was able to do all things whatsoever He pleased. May God increase our faith! I would love to have such faith, that I would go forth into the battle of the Lord believing that He would not only protect me from the enemy, but that He would work for me, and save sinners for His glory, and bring souls to our church for baptism and

◊ (Continued on page 236)

By Many or Few

(Continued from page 235) ♦

membership. Lord increase my faith!

This statement implies a spirit of zeal and of courage. Wouldn't you just love to have the zeal and courage of Jonathan? How many of us feel that we are as zealous for the Lord as we would like to be? May the Lord put in each of us a great zeal for His work, and for His great cause of the gospel, and for the salvation of His elect in our community. May He put in us a zeal for His work that is greater than our love for our necessary food. And may He give us the courage to go forth with the sword of the Lord, and with the power of the gospel of Jesus. May God remove all fear of the enemy from our hearts, that we would not fear their faces, or their hard sayings, and even their mockings and threatenings. May God give us the zeal and courage of Jonathan!

This statement also implies faith in action. This is an example of faith mingled with works. Jonathan and His armor bearer didn't have a dead faith. They put their faith to the test. They put their faith on the line for the Lord. This is what a healthy, living faith will cause the children of God to do. A living faith will serve. A living faith will fight the Lord's battles. May God give us the faith of Jonathan!

Secondly, let's notice the phrase; "**unto the garrison of these uncircumcised.**"

Jonathan and his armor bearer knew the odds of the conflict. They knew that they were just two men going against a garrison, which was about twenty armed soldiers.

They were going to battle with the uncircumcised. These uncircumcised live and walk after the flesh. They worship and trust in idols, and they are full of pride and self confidence. They are full of wickedness and ungodly sin, and they hate the people of God. They know not the God of Heaven, and they want nothing to do with Him.

Beloved, this is the kind of foe that we face when we go out to fight the Lord's battles. They are uncircumcised in heart and mind and ears. They are idol worshippers, and they are full of human pride and arrogance. They are wicked and vile sinners. They despise and hate Christians and even God Himself, unless God opens their hearts to repent and believe the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we go forth to the battle the odds are certainly against us from the human perspective. There are many more of the human foe than there are of us. But the way that we should look at it is, these are all the more that the Lord might slay by His spirit, and bring to salvation through the preaching of the gospel message. "The more the merrier" should be our motto. The more lost sinners we meet with, the

more likely there is to be some of God's elect among them. And if God be with us, and work for us, then so much greater will be the victory. I think that was Jonathan's sentiments exactly!

May God help us to go over into the garrison of the enemy. There is a great cause. May God give us the faith, and the zeal, and the courage to go forth with the gospel of Jesus.

2. Secondly, "**It may be that the Lord will work for us?**"

Jonathan was not overconfident that the Lord would do a great work in their behalf, but he was confident that He could do a great work for them.

Jonathan, I believe, recognized both the sovereignty and the providence of God. As we already saw, Jonathan believed that God could do a great work. He knew that his God was the all-powerful, omnipotent God, and that He could do whatsoever He pleased with His creation. Jonathan knew that in God's eyes "**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?**" (Daniel 4:35).

Jonathan also knew that his God did all things according to His perfect providential will, and according to His good pleasure, and according to His plan and purpose. He didn't believe in "name it claim it" theology. He knew that the battle was the Lord's, and that the time of the battle, and the time of the victory were all in the hands of the sovereign God of Heaven. Therefore, Jonathan was not so presumptuous as to go ahead of the Lord. But on the other hand he was hopeful and sought the Lord to work for them, and give them a great victory. And Jonathan was willing to be used as an instrument of the Lord to accomplish His work. You see, all these things work together in God's sovereign providential will and purpose. We cannot overlook or neglect either the sovereign power and providence of God, or human instrumentality in the work of the Lord. To do so is to invite failure in the Lord's work, and to fall short of the victory, and to fall short of the blessings of the Lord.

The words "**The Lord may work for us**" imply that God does bend down His great ear to hear and to give us our heart's desire, especially when our desire is His glory and the good of His people. We need to keep in our hearts and minds that He is our God, and we are His people. He chose us and called us to salvation, and called us to a great service. He called us to serve Him, and to fight His battles. It is His design and desire to "work for us" as we work for Him. Thus, the saying is fulfilled, "**we are laborers together with God.**"

We need to come to Him as the captain of the host, and receive His orders and

go forth to the battle. We also need to bring our battle strategies to Him and see if He approves of our designs, and then ask Him to work for us to win the victory. And we are not supposed to quit and give up if He doesn't approve of our ideas. Often times in the New Testament it was the Apostle Paul's design to do this or that, but the Holy Spirit didn't allow him go do it, or to go to a certain place to preach. But he kept on seeking, and kept on going, and kept on serving, and kept on fighting the battle for the souls of men. Just because the Holy Spirit doesn't approve of one idea, doesn't mean He doesn't approve of us or our ideas at all. Pray about it, and find out what He does want us do it.

3. Thirdly, "**There is no restraint unto the Lord to save by many or by few?**"

The words "**there is no restraint unto the Lord**" imply at least a few things. First, there is no restraint in terms of the Lord's power, as we have already discussed His omnipotence. There is nothing or no one who can put chains and fetters on our God to bind Him, or hinder Him in anyway from doing any work that He desires to do. He does whatsoever He pleases with no exceptions- if this were not true, then He would not be God.

This phrase also implies something else. It implies that God has not restrained Himself from saving by many or by few. In other words, God could have required a large army of valiant soldiers, as He sometimes did, before He would agree to work for them. Or, he could have required a very small army, as He sometimes did, before He would work for them. God has no set rule in this matter. God has not limited Himself from working in behalf

of His people based on their number or size. That is certainly good news for us, as we mentioned in our introduction, being a small church numerically. We have more than twice as many members as the First Baptist Church of Jerusalem had at its inception, and He worked mightily through them and for them! Therefore we can have this same confidence that He can do mighty works for us and through us. God has not limited Himself from doing so.

This phrase also implies that God has not restrained Himself from saving by few as in part of the whole army. In other words, He might be pleased to use just 2 or 3 of us in our church to do a great work of salvation in the community, and to start at revival fire that would lead to the salvation of hundreds or even thousands of souls. Don't think that He couldn't do it! Every time we go out on visitation we need to believe that God might do a great work for us. Every time you, as an individual, witness to people in your sphere of influence, you need to do so believing that God might do a great work for you. I don't think I'm being fanciful in what I'm saying. I really believe this should be our belief concerning our God and His work for His people. We should go forth in faith, and in hope, and in expectation that this may be the very hour that God is going to do a work.

Beloved, may God help us to "**go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised,**" for "**it may be that the Lord will work for us,**" because we know that "**there is no restraint unto the Lord to save by many or by few?**"



THE BIBLE NEWSPAPER

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

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

KENTUCKY'S TEN COMMANDMENT DISPLAYS GO TO 6TH CIRCUIT

(EP News)--A three-judge panel today heard a Kentucky county defending a courthouse display containing the Ten Commandments and other historical documents. For several years the ACLU has been fighting to remove the Ten Commandments in McCreary County. The case made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled the display unconstitutional. Mathew Staver, founder of Liberty Counsel and dean of Liberty University School of Law, said the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals will now rule on the motivation of the government officials who established

the displays. "This issue of whether or not the display is constitutional, based upon the motivation of those that put it up, is really a red herring," he said. "It makes no difference whether somebody intended to have a display as a religious display or a secular display. What really matters is the display itself?"

DOCTORS MAKE STATEMENT ON HEALTH-CARE REFORM

(EP News)--Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., has offered to preserve Medicare reimbursements if physicians start supporting health-care reform. Medicare payments to physicians are scheduled to be cut over the next 10 years. Dr. David Stevens,

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executive director of the Christian Medical Association (CMA), said Senate leadership has hit a new low. "This is a threat to take away significant funding from doctors," he said. "It's just Chicago-style politics." CMA members oppose the health-care plan mainly because it forces Americans to pay for abortions. "Faith-based physicians, in particular, are extremely up in arms about right-of-conscience," Stevens said, "which is not protected in the reform legislation."

SCHWARZENEGGER SIDES WITH GAY ACTIVISTS ON TWO BILLS

(EP News)--California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed two pro-gay bills in early October. One recognizes same-sex marriages performed out of state; the other encourages schoolchildren to celebrate one of the nation's first openly homosexual politicians. Senate Bill 54 requires California to validate and recognize same-sex marriages performed outside the state prior to Nov. 5, 2008, when California voters approved Proposition 8, amending their constitution to protect marriage. Schwarzenegger also signed SB 572, which designates May 22 as Harvey Milk Day in the state's public schools. He vetoed the same legislation a year ago.

SENATE HOLDS HEARINGS ON SAME-SEX BENEFITS

(EP News)--On Oct. 14 the Senate held a hearing on special federal privileges for "same-sex partners." The Domestic Partnership Benefits and Obligations Act of 2009 allows any federal employee who claims a "same-sex domestic partner" to be entitled to the same employment benefits that are currently available only to married federal employees and their spouses. President Obama signed an executive order during the first hours of his presidency extending limited benefits to the same-sex partners of federal workers. The new bill would expand those privileges. The Domestic Partnership Benefits and Obligations Act includes health and disability insurance, an expansion of family-leave programs, life and long-term care insurance and other compensation.

PRESIDENT TAPS LESBIAN ACTIVIST TO EEOC

(EP News)--The president has nominated Chai Feldblum, a lesbian activist, to be commissioner for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Her appointment is awaiting Senate confirmation. Feldblum, a law professor at Georgetown University, has signed an online petition titled, "Beyond Same-Sex Marriage: A New Strategic Vision for All Our Families and Relationships." That petition chides conservatives for opposing same-sex "marriage" and also calls for a "new vision" for achieving recognition from the government and private sector for diverse kinds of partnerships. Speaking at a forum in 2004, Feldblum stated that "gay sex is morally

good."

PLANNED PARENTHOOD USED UNDERAGE GIRLS IN CLINICAL TRIALS

(EP News)--A new report from a Planned Parenthood watchdog group finds the abortion business used underage girls in at least 10 clinical trials over the last two decades to push abortion, birth control, and STD testing. The news comes at a time when Planned Parenthood is facing criticism for videos showing it ignored potential statutory abuse cases. Jim Sedlak, vice president of American Life League and the head of its STOPP Planned Parenthood effort, released the details in a statement to LifeNews.com. In it, he said that 28 Planned Parenthood affiliates have been involved in 33 clinical trials, some of which received government funds, and 10 of them involved girls as young as 13 years of age. That number represents one-third of all clinical trials surveyed in the STOPP report.

GAY ADOPTION BILL WOULD INFRINGE ON STATES' RIGHTS

(EP News)--U.S. Rep. Pete Stark, D-Calif., has introduced the Every Child Deserves a Family Act (H.R. 3827), which opens the door for gay adoption. Stark cited the number of kids in foster care as a reason for allowing homosexual and unmarried couples to adopt. Kris Mineau, president of the Massachusetts Family Institute, said H.R. 3827 would restrict federal funds from states that preserve adoption or foster programs for married moms and dads. "Certainly, we in Massachusetts, which has the dubious distinction of having the longest tenure of same-sex marriage, feel the pain of forcing homosexual adoption upon the citizens," he said. "The Catholic Church was forced to close their adoption agency because they could not theologically allow children to be adopted by homosexuals."

ABORTION IN HEALTH-CARE REFORM MAY HURT MINORITIES THE MOST

(EP News)--Black Americans could be the group most affected by including taxpayer-funded abortions in health-care reform, according to pro-life experts. Jim Sedlak, vice president of the American Life League, said studies show one in two African-American pregnancies end in abortion, and the abortion rate for black women is almost three times that of white women. "These statistics show that (health care) is going to wind up paying mostly for abortions for African-American women," Sedlak said. "It's going to be killing off the African-American race in this country."

LAWSUIT TARGETS ILLINOIS PARENTAL-NOTIFICATION LAW

(EP News)--The ACLU is representing a Chicago physician and an abortion clinic in a lawsuit challenging the Illinois Parental Notice of Abortion Act that requires physicians to notify the parent of a girl younger than

18 before performing an abortion. The suit claims the law is unconstitutional and wants to block its Nov. 3 implementation. Mary Spaulding Balch, director of state legislation with the National Right to Life Committee, said she expects the court to throw out the suit. "The Supreme Court has said, 'Yes, parents have a right to be involved. They have a right to know,'" she said. Mailee Smith, staff counsel with Americans United for Life, said the law will protect children. "Minors in the state of Illinois will finally be protected by having parental involvement in their abortion decision," she said. "Minors will no longer be able to come into Illinois and have access to abortion without accountability."

ORIGIN OF SPECIES GETS A FACELIFT FOR 150TH ANNIVERSARY

(EP News)--Living Waters Ministry will give 170,000 copies of Charles Darwin's controversial book Origin of Species to students at 100 of the nation's leading universities in November. The campaign was launched to mark the 150th anniversary of the book. Ray Comfort, president of LivingWaters.com, said a 50-page introduction pokes holes in the Darwinian evolution theory and presents the Gospel. "People are afraid, especially atheistic evolutionists, that their agenda is going to be exposed," he said. "Atheism is not intellectual. It's absolute foolishness to believe that nothing created everything." Mike Johnson, senior legal counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund, which is part of the campaign, said he hopes the project sparks important discussions on campuses. "We wanted to get involved to ensure that no one gets in the way of those rights," he said.

OFFENSIVE "CURB YOUR ENTHUSIASM" GAG DRAWS CRITICISM

(EP News)--Larry David of HBO's "Curb Your Enthusiasm" has angered religious groups over a sketch he did for the show in which urine is spattered on a picture of Jesus. David's assistant concludes that Jesus is crying. She and her mother kneel in prayer before the desecrated painting. Deal Hudson, author and publisher of InsideCatholic.com, said the episode wasn't funny. "Somebody should (apologize)," he said. "When is it going to stop? When is common sense going to dictate that people realize this willingness of artists to do to Christianity what they would never do to Judaism or Islam?"

HIGH COURT KEEPS NAMES OF MARRIAGE ADVOCATES PRIVATE

(EP News)--The U.S. Supreme Court has ordered the names and addresses of Ref. 71 petitions signers in Washington state to be kept private. Ref. 71 will allow voters to decide if the state should expand domestic partnerships to be marriage in all but name. James Bopp, lead counsel for Protect Marriage Washington, said the ruling shields supporters of marriage from harassment and threats. "The Supreme Court

took a large step forward in protecting the rights of citizens who support a traditional definition of marriage to speak freely," he said. "No citizen should ever have their personal property destroyed or receive death threats for exercising their right to engage in the political process." Personal attacks were seen in California last year after voters approved Prop. 8, the constitutional amendment that defined marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Names of petition-signers there were released to the public.

TAXPAYER-FUNDED ABORTION KEY IN HEALTH-CARE DEBATE

(EP News)--The Senate Finance Committee has sent a health-care proposal to its colleagues, but the legislation includes language that would mean taxpayer funding for abortions.

The majority of Republicans are holding fast to their resolve to reject any bill that does not contain specific language denying abortion coverage. Pro-life groups are also keeping up the pressure for exclusion of abortion from the final draft. Rep. Doug Lamborn, R-Colo., held a town-hall meeting in Colorado Springs and said a Hyde-type amendment needs to be added to the legislation. The Hyde Amendment

PORTRAYALS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ON THE RISE

(EP News)--"Women In Peril," a Parents Television Council (PTC) study, found that TV storylines depicting violence against women have increased 120 percent over the past five years. Other violent crime on TV has increased 2 percent. Melissa Henson, director of communications and public education for the PTC, said the impact of exposure to such violence may not be known for years. "When children are growing up on this media diet that's showing women being victimized or tortured or kidnapped," she said, "the long-term effects may be potentially devastating."

CAP-AND-TRADE BILL WOULD HARM FAMILIES

(EP News)--The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee is considering a cap and trade bill that purportedly takes aim at global warming. Under a cap-and-trade scheme, the government would set a limit or "cap" on emissions of carbon dioxide. If, for example, a company goes over the limit, the government would force it to buy "credits" from other companies deemed by government to be producing less carbon dioxide than the cap allows. In countries where it has been tried, fraud has been rampant. The Heritage Foundation estimates that by 2035, the typical American family of four would see energy costs rise more than \$1,500 a year.

HATE-CRIMES BILL SIGNED INTO LAW

(EP News)--President Barack Obama signed the hate crimes bill into law on Oct. 28.

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Bible & The Newspaper

(Continued from page 237) ♦

The bill provides special protection based on a victim's sexual orientation or gender identity. Family advocates say the law will endanger religious freedom. Erik Stanley, senior legal counsel with the Alliance Defense Fund, said all victims deserve equal justice. "This law is a grave threat to the First Amendment because it provides special penalties based on what people think, feel or believe," he said. "It paves the way for the criminalization of speech that is not deemed 'politically correct.'"

D.C. COUNCIL HOLDS HEARINGS ON GAY MARRIAGE

(EP News)--The Council of the District of Columbia heard from hundreds of people Oct. 26 who signed up to share their opinions on a measure that would legalize gay marriage. Because so many wanted to speak, the Council will held a second day of hearings the following day. Local pastors are demanding the Council allow D.C. citizens to vote on the issue. Council members say it's a civil-rights issue that doesn't need to be on the ballot.

RELIGIOUS GROUPS DISRESPECTED AT "RESPECT" AWARDS

(EP News)--GLSEN – the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network – held a star-studded event this month called the "Respect Awards." HBO and ABC/Disney heavyweights were in attendance, as well as stars from popular television shows. Ironically, while accepting GLSEN's "Respect" award, technology entrepreneur David Bohnett slammed some of the nation's largest religious groups, and issued what amounted to a manifesto calling for people to fight them. Bohnett said, in part: "It is the evangelical and fundamentalist groups that teach homosexuality is a sin, who stand in the way of fairness and equality. It's time to combat, head on, religious organizations that are funding the opposition to marriage equality and safe-school legislation."

GLOBAL WARMING BILL HEADS TO FULL SENATE VOTE

(EP News)--A controversial environmental bill was moved out of committee this week and is headed for debate on the floor of the Senate. Despite Republican protests that the bill will negatively affect families, members of the Environmental and Public Works Committee voted 11-1 to approve the plan. Similar laws in Europe have seen only limited success in reducing greenhouse-gas emissions and cost billions. Republicans are calling for additional study of the measure, but Democrats call that a waste of taxpayer dollars.

HOUSE CONSIDERS SAME-SEX PARTNER BENEFITS FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

(EP News)--The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is set

to take up a bill that would allow domestic-partner benefits for federal employees. Policy experts said the bill is an attack on the federal Defense of Marriage Act and will push America deeper into debt. U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, said he'll fight passage of the bill. "When you start having this kind of legislation," he said, "you diminish the value of marriage and diminish the value of family – which hurts our culture."

PAST RULINGS HAUNT PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JUDICIAL NOMINEE

(EP News)--Federal District Judge David Hamilton has been nominated for a seat on the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Conservative senators have objected to Hamilton, because he believes in the "empathy standard" brought to light in the confirmation hearings of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. The "empathy standard" means judges call on personal and life experience when making decisions, instead of following the rule of law. In one ruling, Hamilton said legislators in the Indiana House could not pray in the name of Jesus, but prayers to Allah were acceptable. In June, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted along party lines to approve Hamilton with Democrats voting yes and Republicans no. The appeals court handles cases involving pro-life issues from Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin, which is important because Hamilton has upset pro-life advocates with his pro-abortion decisions.

LAWYER ORDERED TO PAY LIBERTY COUNSEL FOR LITIGATION AGAINST JEWS FOR JESUS

(EP News)--A Florida circuit court judge, for the fourth time, dismissed a frivolous defamation complaint filed against Jews for Jesus by Edith Rapp. After dismissing the complaint, the court ruled that Rapp's attorney must pay personally for the time and cost expended by Liberty Counsel in defending Jews for Jesus against the complaint. The case has been repeatedly dismissed because of unprofessional, vindictive, and vitriolic submissions by Rapp's attorney against the Jews for Jesus organization and against Christianity. After multiple warnings, including an order by an appeals court, to remove offensive allegations from the complaint were ignored, the judge stated that "it is unjust that [Jews for Jesus] should be put in this position in the first place but it is doubly unjust that it should have to pay for it."

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS NEW ZEALAND STUDY LINKING ABORTION AND DEPRESSION

(EP News)--A New Zealand study that says abortion puts women at increased risk of anxiety and depression is but the latest in a long line of scientific reports that reach the same conclusion said leaders of the Silent No More Awareness Campaign. "Science has for years been supporting what we already know from the public testimonies and the private devastation of post-abortive women," said

Janet Morana, co-founder of SNMAC, the world's largest network of individuals harmed by abortion. "This study is one more rock on a mountain of evidence that when a woman terminates a life she has been nurturing, she cannot anesthetize her soul."



ObamaCare's Scary October Surprise

By Robert Knight

(EP News)--Stung by a rising tide of resistance and a closing window of opportunity, House Democrats have unleashed a new version of ObamaCare, weighing in at 1,990 pages and with a \$1 trillion price tag. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi promises to ram it through quickly, exhibiting a disdain for her countrymen that makes Marie Antoinette look like a populist.

The Democrats are going for broke, which means we'll all be broke if this is not stopped. The "Affordable Health Care for America Act" (HR 3962) is so comprehensive that it even micromanages restaurant menus and vending machines. That's a clear signal that this is not about health care. It's about whether the people of the United States will allow power-mad Washington politicians to plunge us into the kind of top-down socialism that is strangling Western Europe and has devastated economies and destroyed freedom wherever it is imposed.

President Obama promised "transparency" and that any bill would be written in public. That was a lie. This monstrosity was hatched behind closed doors. Obama further promised that his health care initiative would not "add a dime to the federal deficit," which he has already tripled since taking office. It was another lie. No one can honestly believe that a gargantuan takeover of the nation's \$2.5 trillion health care industry will save taxpayers money. No government program results in savings. Each one grows exponentially; creates dependent constituencies that lobby for yet more tax dollars; and empowers bureaucrats for whom mission failure ensures more staff, more money, and more power. There is simply no governing restraint such as a profit motive or anxious stockholders. The voters? Surely you jest. They are far, far away and kept in check by a compliant leftist media. At least, so far.

Does anyone really believe that a government plan consisting of nearly two thousand pages will simplify things and leave us a freer people?

Instead, it will saddle us, our children, and our grandchildren with trillions in debt and will make every family in America beholden to the whims of government health bureaucrats. The bill is a true Halloween horror, with scary

stuff throughout. Taxpayers will be forced to pay for abortions. Committees in both houses of Congress defeated thirty different amendments barring such funding. Illegal aliens will be covered, since there is no language that would enforce any prohibition against them. Among the thirteen new taxes found in the bill by Americans for Tax Reform is the "medicine cabinet tax," which bars people from paying for non-prescription medicine with tax-deferred health savings accounts. Senior citizens will bear the brunt of "savings" that are supposed to partially pay for the bill, with \$500 billion in Medicare cuts. Liberal pundits continue to ridicule Sarah Palin's colorful but accurate term "death panels," but government control, cost-cutting and Medicare penalties against docs who provide "too much" care will lead to bureaucrats literally deciding who lives and who dies. The bill also includes punitive taxes on people earning higher incomes, which epitomizes the Marxist dream of confiscation and redistribution.

Obviously, the Washington elites did not fully get the message when Americans revolted by the millions this summer and early fall. Instead, Pelosi, Reid, and Obama threatened the health insurance industry Chicago-gangster-style, warning them to shut up or else. They're about to do the same to the rest of us, threatening us with penalties if we don't buy insurance. If we don't pay the penalties, we go to jail. They don't even pretend that this is constitutionally legal. When Pelosi was asked by a reporter exactly what in the Constitution permits the federal government to force people to purchase a service, her answer was, "Are you serious? Are you serious?" before moving on to another question.

ObamaCare supporters were stung when the Congressional Budget Office and Joint Committee on Taxation reported that the first House version would add more than \$1.5 trillion in new federal spending over the next 10 years. So in the Senate, they went back to the drawing board, wrote the Baucus version, and tried to pretend that splitting off a proposed 10-year, \$247 billion Medicare doctors' fee "fix" would not count in health care reform. This was their way of feigning observation of Obama's pledge not to "add a dime." But even the liberal *Washington Post* editorialized against this sleight-of-hand in a piece entitled "2.47 trillion dimes," and the proposal went down in flames, with all forty Republicans, twelve Democrats and one Independent voting against it on October 21.

In the House, they continued to scribble. The Congressional Budget Office came out with its report on October 29 and concluded that the new bill would cost a bit over \$1 trillion over 10 years

♦ (Continued on page 239)

Scary October Surprise

(Continued from page 238) ♦

but that collecting "penalties paid by individuals and employers" would bring the cost down to a mere \$894 billion and reduce the federal deficit by \$104 billion. The House also came up with a separate "doc fix" bill that would suspend cuts in Medicare payments to doctors. Like the "doc fix" defeated in the Senate, it wouldn't add to the actual costs in the health care bill, thus preserving the illusion that the big bill will cost less than \$1 trillion.

The ongoing takeover attempt of our health care system is proof that Congressman have regrown their tin ears now that they're back in the Beltway bubble, insulated from constituents. But they are not immune to pressure in the form of phone calls, faxes and e-mails, at least not if they arrive by the boatload.

Maine Senator Olympia Snowe, the lone Republican in the Senate Finance Committee to vote for the Baucus bill, has said she will oppose any plan that emerges with a "public option." That's because although Obama, Pelosi, and Reid say it would merely create a competitor for private insurance and bring down costs, a public option would actually cause the collapse of the private insurance market. Employers would jump ship, opting to pay a fine rather than provide insurance. A study by the Lewin Group estimates that 88 million Americans would lose their private insurance if a government competitor is created.

Over the next few days, don't be surprised if the "public option" is dropped or amended to buy off Blue Dog Democrats and perhaps even some Republicans. Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi put it back in with a nod and a wink as if to appease the far-left liberals who were making lots of noise. But quietly dropping it would be a small price to pay to get something -- anything -- into the law that can then be expanded until it crushes private care and morphs into truly socialized medicine.

Watch what they do, not what they say.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Grace Baptist Church located at 143 Cross Baptist Church Road Rural Hall, NC 27045 plans a revival meeting for Wednesday, December 9 through Sunday, December 13.

The guest preacher will be Elder Troy Sheppard of Citrus Missionary Baptist Church of Inverness, FL.

Services will be each evening at 7:30 Wednesday through Saturday, on the Lord's day services are at 9:45; 10:45; lunch provided by the ladies of

church then an afternoon service around 1:00 to close the meeting.

We invite all to visit with us and ask that you pray for the church and visiting Pastor. Should you have any questions concerning this meeting please contact Pastor Gene Kiger at (336) 377-9808.

The Victory Baptist Church of Chehalis, WA is in need of a pastor.

The church is small, and the new Pastor will need support from sister churches.

There is a faithful nucleus. They have a building in town. They are grounded in Sovereign Grace Landmark truths and are good people who love the Lord. Any brethren who may be interested please contact Gerard Griesen - 360-388-8697 or write to: Victory Baptist Church 1617 N.W. West St. Chehalis, WA 98532

The Grace Baptist Church in Fredericktown, OH is currently seeking a pastor, and also guest speakers.

Our current services: Sunday school at 10:00 am, Worship service at 11:00 followed by lunch and an afternoon service at 1:00 pm. Wednesdays at 7:00 pm.

Any brethren that may be interested in filling in to help our ministry can contact Bro. Tory Smith at (614) 205-0729 or by email toremup@columbus.rr.com.

The Bethel Bible Baptist Church, PO Box 85, Mansfield, LA is in need of a pastor.

Any interested Elder should call Connie McMellon at 318-872-1647.

The Landmark Baptist Church of Collinsville, IL is in need of a pastor.

Any interested Elders may call (618) 288-4236 for more information.

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 10-1-2009 to 10-31-2009

Beginning Balance	\$11,546.35
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
.....	475.00
TOTAL	12,021.35

EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	600.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	600.00
.....	\$11,421.35
Less Corbin, KY des.	-1,126.12
ENDING BALANCE	\$10,295.23

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$1,286.12
RECEIPTS:	
.....	1,286.12
Radio Time (WCTT)	160.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,126.12

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 10-1-2009 to 10-31-2009

Beginning Balance	\$2,988.00
RECEIPTS:	

Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX.....	25.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	28.35
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	588.10
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL.....	60.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX.....	100.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay, WV	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL.....	25.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR.....	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL.....	50.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK.....	35.00
L. H. Farrell, Des Allemands, LA.....	100.00
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC.....	50.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM.....	100.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH.....	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR.....	50.00
South Park M.B.C., Seattle, WA	25.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Eagle, AK.....	250.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL.....	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C. Silsbee, TX.....	60.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC.....	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	194.00
Anon.....	1,150.00
Dividing checks.....	150.00
Sub Total	\$4,410.45
TOTAL.....	\$7,398.45

EXPENDITURES:

Printing.....	581.71
Postage	808.28
Wages*	2,660.50
FICA	175.92
Dividing Checks	150.00
Supplies	161.33
Total Expenditures	4,537.74
ENDING BALANCE	\$2,860.71

*Extra wages were for extra help on several projects we are working on. These funds reimbursed by Berea Baptist Church.



This book is a collection of sermons by Milburn Cockrell on Christmas. The title was taken from a small booklet he first printed in the 1960's. Articles included: A Man-Made God, The Three Wise Men, An X-ray View of Xmas and Questions for Honest Minds. Retail Price is \$3.95. Please see shipping chart for postage.

Order from
Berea Baptist Bookstore
PO Box 39
Mantachie, MS 38855

Bible Biography Series

by John G. Butler

The books in this series are expository, analytical, alliterated, plain and practical. Each of these books has a dark blue hardback cover with gold stamping.

- 1-Joseph: The Patriarch of Character\$18
- 2-Jonah: The Parochial Prophet\$18
- 3-Elijah: The Prophet of Confrontation\$18
- 4-Elisha: The Miracle Prophet\$21
- 5-Gideon: The Mighty Man of Valor\$17
- 6-Samson: The Weak Strong Man\$17
- 7-John the Baptist: The Herald of Christ \$18
- 8-Peter: The Illustrious Disciple\$23
- 9-Abraham: The Father of the Jews\$23
- 10-Lot: The Worldly Christian\$18
- 11-Paul: The Missionary Apostle\$32
- 12-Moses: The Emancipator of Israel\$32
- 13-Joshua: The Conqueror of Canaan\$21
- 14-Samuel: The Prophet of Transition\$19
- 15-David: The King of Israel\$37
- 16-Nehemiah: The Wall Builder\$21
- 17-Jacob: The Sower and Reaper\$23
- 18-Hezekiah: The King of Survival\$19
- 19-Mordecai: The Defender of the Jews\$19
- 20-Ruth: The Ancestress of Christ\$17
- 21-Daniel: The Man of Loyalty\$25
- 22-Solomon: The King of Splendor...\$22
- 23-Noah: The Ark Builder\$18
- 24-Job: The Suffering Saint\$27
- 25-Isaac: The Promised Son\$20
- 26-Saul: The Rejected King\$25
- 27-Heroes: Biography of Faith\$18



It has taken a long time, but the book *The Attributes of GOD* by Milburn Cockrell is now available. The retail price is \$8, but as a prepublication till the end of the year the price is \$4.

The book contains fifteen chapters. Chapters cover the following attributes: Omniscience, Foreknowledge, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Eternity, Holiness, Love, Goodness, Veracity, Spirituality, Mercy, Independency, Justice, Immutability and Long-Suffering.

- Order from -
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Shipping Chart

Order Value	Add
Minimum	\$5.00
\$25.00-49.99.....	\$6.00
\$50.00-74.99.....	\$7.00
\$75.00-99.99.....	\$8.00
\$100.00 and Up.....	FREE

Speech With Salt

By Rosco Brong
(1908 - 1985)

GOD'S GRACE IN CHRIST SHOULD
FLAVOR THE SPEECH OF HIS DISCIPLES

"And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?" (Luke 4:22).

"Let your speech be always with (in) grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:6).

Salt is used in the Scriptures, as in everyday life, in different ways and for different purposes. In Colossians 4:6 the phrase "seasoned with salt" modifies "speech," which is first described as being "in grace." Therefore, whatever is here meant by salt, it must be in grace. The salt is not something to add to grace, but a means of seasoning speech in grace. This grammatical note may save us from the error of using spiritual salt substitutes in ruinous attempts to make the gospel carnally appetizing to people who cannot stomach pure grace.

SALT OF JUDGMENT

First mention of salt in the Bible is in Genesis 14:3, "the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea." That is, what was the vale of Siddim in Abram's day had become, when Moses wrote, the salt sea—probably as a result of God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah.

Second mention of salt is in Genesis 19:26, where we read that Lot's wife "became a pillar of salt."

But is there judgment in the gospel of God's grace? Yes: in this very gospel "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom. 1:18).

Leaving out the salt of divine judgment against sin has so emasculated what passes for Christianity today that it has become a mere program of social reform, a means of evading rather than facing personal responsibility, a system of "passing the buck," in which everybody blames everybody else for whatever goes wrong.

If God is remembered at all in this unsalted gospel that is no gospel, He is thought of only as the One to blame for the whole mess in which we find ourselves, or as a weak and helpless first cause that has lost control of the universe it started.

But that God "will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6) is New Testament truth. "Christ died for our sins" (I Cor. 15:3) is the very heart of the gospel, but this statement is meaningless if not salted with the wrath and righteous judgment of God.

SALT OF COMPASSION

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever

believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

God has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezek. 33:11).

"Jesus wept" (John 11:35).

"When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Matt. 9:36).

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it" (Luke 19:41).

Surely, like Jesus, we need to salt our speech with tears of compassion for weary, lost, and wayward souls. Though we sow the word, maybe it will not grow in the hearts of the hearers because we have failed to water it with our tears. See Ps. 126:6.

SALT OF WISDOM

Paul did not shun to declare all the counsel of God (Acts 20:27), but no man can declare it all in one sermon, one ministry, or one lifetime. (See Rom. 11:33). And not all truth is equally appropriate to all people at all times and in all circumstances. Hence the apostle asked for prayer that he might manifest "the mystery of Christ" as he "ought to speak."

The purpose of the seasoning with salt mentioned in our text is "that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." In other words, we have need of wisdom in adapting our speech to the individuals to whom we speak.

What is meant here is not a departing from or a compromising of the truth, but a wise choice of that facet or portion of truth befitting individual needs, and a wise manner of presenting it.

Intelligent adaptation of our speech to the understanding of our hearers need not involve any sacrifice of principle.



Often it means only a change in manner of expression; sometimes it requires that statement and explanation of some things must wait upon further development of spiritual understanding.

After a period of possibly more than three years of intensive training in discipleship, Jesus told His disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12).

Nor were all difficulties removed with the coming of the "Spirit of truth," for Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able" (I Cor. 3:2).

Speech faithful to truth needs also the salt of wisdom as to what, when, and where to speak in the manner that God will most bless to the spiritual profit of our hearers.

SALT OF AUTHORITY

When Jesus taught the people, "they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes" (Mark 1:22).

Now of course Jesus had authority in a sense that we cannot have, but in a broader sense we can speak from the authority of God's Word. Our speech should be salted with a conviction of that authority.

So long as we are merely voicing personal opinions, or repeating the dicta of other men—be they popes, reformers, synods, associations, or conventions—that long we have no special claim on the attention of our hearers. Dr. Whozit's notions are worth no more than yours or mine.

But when our speech is honestly salted with "Thus saith the Lord," then the words of our Master apply, "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me" (Luke 10:16).

SALT OF TESTIMONY

For reasons best known to Himself, it has pleased God to use the personal testimony of His people to preserve and promote His Word among men. "Ye are my witnesses." He told Israel in Old Testament days, and in the New Testament Jesus said to His church, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Isa. 43:10-12; Acts 1:8).

No doubt God could, and perhaps

sometimes He does, use His written Word apart from the direct personal testimony of His children to make Himself known to the lost. There have been claims to this effect. But in the Bible God sent Philip from Samaria to Gaza, and Peter from Joppa to Caesarea to add their oral testimony to the written Word.

God's people who know Him believe His word rather than the words of men, but strangers to His grace can best be introduced to Him by the credible testimony of men who already know Him.

Our speech in grace, therefore, will be more effective when salted with a sincere personal conviction and testimony of the truth of what we say.

SALT OF EXAMPLE

What we are and what we do can either confirm or nullify what we say. However admirable our speech, it needs the salt of behavior consistent with our claims.

"Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it" (Mark 9:50)?

In recognition of this great truth, Paul, Silas, and Timothy wrote to the Thessalonians, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake" (I Thess. 1:5).

For the same reason, Peter admonished Christian wives (I Pet. 3:1): "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation (conduct) of the wives."

Being good examples of God's saving grace is the best salt we can add to our speech in grace: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (I Tim. 1:15).

SALT OF THE SPIRIT

Only the Spirit of God can add spiritual power and conviction to our speech. The first church was commanded to tarry until endued with power from on high. Churches and individual Christians today have more activity but less power than the saints at Jerusalem on and after Pentecost.

"I have planted; Apollos watered; but God gave the increase," Paul wrote the Corinthians, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (I Cor. 3:6; II Cor. 4:7).

Like Peter at Pentecost and Stephen a little later, we need our speech in grace salted with the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Thus we may win converts or thus we may get ourselves stoned to death, or perhaps get some other response: but at least we shall have spoken as we ought to speak (Col. 4:4).

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