

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

An Open Letter to Fearful Saints in this World of Darkness

By Matthew Stepp
of Wayne, West Virginia

I cannot know what is your personal fear, but I know that the pressing loneliness of your situation may distract you from the fact that you are never truly alone. **"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood**



with me, and strengthened me; ...and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for

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A Lodging Place

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they



are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD" (Jer. 9:1-3).

I want to use this passage as an example of our situation today – especially as an example of the church of Jesus Christ as the

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Yield Not To Temptation

By Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 – 2002)

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41).

These words of Jesus Christ were addressed to three of His disciples who were sleeping when they ought to have been watching and praying. Watching and praying not only supports us in



temptation, but it prevents us being tempted in some cases. Christ did not say here: "Watch and pray, that ye be not tempted,"

but, **"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."** It is one thing for temptation to knock

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Paul's Greatest Mistake

By Curtis Pugh
(1944 - 2018)

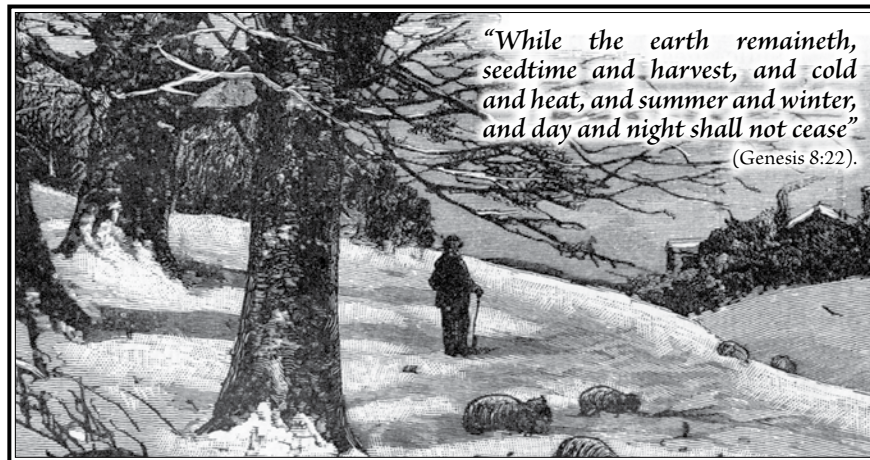
The fact that a man was an apostle did not make him perfect. Apostleship does not mean that a man was free from mistakes. Like He does with all of His true children, God teaches His children through their mistakes so that they cease from making



them. This is a part of chastening of **"whom all [sons] are partakers"** (Heb. 12:8).

(Obviously from the context the word "all" there

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"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease"

(Genesis 8:22).

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

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

An Open Letter

(Continued from page 1) ♦

ever and ever. Amen" (II Tim. 4:16-18).

I have preached many messages on the absolute sovereignty of God from many texts in the Bible, but truly it is incomplete without understanding the matchless sovereign grace of our dear Saviour. As Bro. John writes: **"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love"** (I John 4:18). I know there shall nothing overtake you, that is not in the will of our powerful and merciful God. **"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ"** (I Thess. 5:9).

I can positively assure you that no death could possibly come upon any of His precious saints that is not ordained, proper and sweet. **"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints"** (Ps. 116:15). It is a precious event that the Lord takes personally upon Himself. Hallelujah! Do not let the devil rob you of your rightful inheritance of joy from your heavenly Father, Who loves you beyond your ability to comprehend. **"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for**

me by my coming to you again" (Phil. 1:21-26).

Christians can embrace the thought of death, as you would embrace any truth of God's Word. Death is not the enemy of a Christian any longer. It is but a passing into eternal life and a cancellation of the curse of the first Adam upon our souls. But that death- your death and mine also- is yet in the future. Do not let these distractions from the devil deprive you of your opportunity to serve the Master currently with the fruits of the Holy Spirit in this present life. Our conversation should be zealous with ardor for our Saviour and the worship should flow from our thankful hearts. Please remember that His blessings far outweigh the temptations, and He will provide a way out, that will resonate to His glory and your soul's edification. **"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"** (I Cor. 10:13).

I will be praying for you, along with my precious wife. Also, I will alert the church body to keep you before the throne of grace. -In His marvelous grip, Bro. Matthew.

P.S. Let this Scripture answer your plea and be a blessing unto you: Psalms 40:1-5, 11~17, **"I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the**

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An Open Letter

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LORD. ...Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. ...Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me. For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me. Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me. ...I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God."



A Lodging Place

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lodging place of wayfaring men.

Surely this world is full of adulterers and treacherous men. Surely it is difficult to find any man, that is valiant for the truth. Instead, we find men that "proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD."

Though our heads, too, are full of waters; and though our eyes, too, may be a fountain of tears; and though we, too, might weep day and night; still, there is a lodging place for us, and there is a hope for the children of God.

THE WAYFARING PEOPLE

First of all, I want us to consider the wayfaring people that are referred to in our text verses.

Surely, though all might not agree with us, we can say that the wayfaring people of our text, can represent the children of God – the strangers and pilgrims that walk the face of this earth, and have done so, since the time of Adam. The Scriptures teach us plainly that those of us that are saved in this life are only a wayfaring people. This world is not our permanent home or dwelling place. Therefore, we need a lodging place in this life.

We read in Isaiah 35:8-10, "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Next, notice these Scriptures from I Chronicles 29:14-15. "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding." David is humbly submitting, that though he and his people were willing to give unto the Lord, and were ready to build the Temple of God; still, they were supremely unworthy, on their own, in the sight of God. Of a truth, no matter how mighty or rich or powerful they might be; and no matter how the things of

this earth might seem important from time to time; still, David and his people were only strangers and sojourners before God.

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:13-16). This New Testament passage clearly demonstrates the temporal nature of our sojourn on this earth.

So, the wayfaring men of our text, could, very easily, be a reference to the children of God – both in the time of Jeremiah, and in our time today. There were some few that followed Jeremiah in his time; and there are some few that follow Jesus Christ in these times. Surely, in the New Testament, we do seek an eternal city and an eternal rest. But, in this life, we have the lodging place – which is the church of Jesus Christ – where we can be safely and securely lodged.

Let me read to you one more passage that reminds us of the sojourn upon which we are, even now, embarked. "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and

sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:1-5). Our hope and our salvation is not on this earth. But, our eternal hope, and our eternal salvation, is in Heaven – where, even now, Jesus Christ intercedes on our behalf. Our citizenship is not of this world, but of Heaven.

THE ASSEMBLY OF TREACHEROUS MEN

Let me show you now, how that we need a lodging place, in this life, as a refuge, and to protect us, from the assembly of treacherous men. Remember, our text verse tells us, "Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men" (Jer. 9:2).

The treacherous and evil men of this world seek to destroy our testimony, and to make us one of the world's own. Corruption has become commonplace in this world, and the exception to the rule of wickedness is the very saint of God. The evil designs of Satan and his followers often times beset us, and we need a lodging place – a refuge – wherein we are made strong, and able to endure and resist. We read in Zephaniah 3:1-7, "Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to

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A Lodging Place

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the oppressing city! She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she drew not near to her God. Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow. Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law. The just LORD is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame. I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant. I said, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings." We need a lodging place to protect us from treacherous men.

Now, return to Jeremiah again, and let us read Jeremiah 7:1-15. "The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these. For if ye thoroughly

amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever. Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD. But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim."

Treacherous men are all around us; in fact, the world itself is full of treachery. We need a lodging place that will keep us from the power and pride of treacherous men.

THE SANCTUARY FROM SIN

When we travel in this world,

and when we sojourn in the flesh, we find that sin is so prevalent all around us, and even, sometimes, within us. So, it is obvious, that in the life, we need a lodging place that can be a sanctuary from the sinful world that is all around us.

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (I Peter 2:11-12).

Paul tells us in II Corinthians 6:14-18, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Where should we go in this world to escape the taint of sin? Where should we flee to leave the sins of the world behind? Surely, our sanctuary from sin is found in the lodging place of the church of Jesus Christ. If we do not avail ourselves of the refuge from sin, which is in Jesus Christ—especially in the

church of Christ—then we will, undoubtedly fall into the snare of sin, and become more and more like the world and the sinners around us.

THE SANCTIFIED PLACE OF WORSHIP

Finally, I want us to notice how that the lodging place (which is the church) can be, and must be, the sanctified place of worship. In fact, we need a lodging place whereby we can offer up a worship that is sanctified and separate from the world. In other words, we need the church of Jesus Christ where we can offer up something purer and higher than that which the world of religion has to offer.

We read in Hebrews 13:9-16, "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

Let me refer you to a verse in the Old Testament, that not only reminds us of the importance of

♦ (Continued on page 6)

Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of
Plant City, Florida



Acquaint Now Thyself With Him #9

The Hand of The Lord Isaiah 59:1-3

Having noted the Arm of the Lord, we now look again at the Hand of the Lord. In Scripture, these are very closely related to one another, and rightly so. For the arm cannot go without the hand, and the hand cannot go without the arm. Yet, there is that which God attributes to His hands. Before we get into the Lesson, let us note Psalm 115:1-18 (Vv. 7). Let us observe:

THE HAND OF THE LORD DESCRIBED:HEAVY

The Hand of the Lord is described in Scripture as **“heavy”** (I Sam. 5:6-9, 11). This speaks of a great weight, burdensome. Here, the Philistines had taken the ark of the Lord. It did not belong to them. It belonged to the Lord. He had given it to His people Israel. The Lord’s hand being heavy speaks to us of sin. We may find God’s hand to be heavy, burdensome upon us, our lives, when we are outside of the will of the Lord. The only way to get out from the heavy hand of the Lord is by confession and forsaking: **“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy”** (Prov. 28:13). Every child of God has felt God’s hand as **“heavy”** upon them when they were under the wrath, full weight of God’s righteous condemnation.

GOOD

The Word of the Lord also describes God’s Hand as **“good”**

(Neh. 2:8, 18). Here we find that Nehemiah speaks of God’s hand as **“good”** and **“upon me.”** Strong’s defines the word **“good”** as **“beautiful, best, better, cheerful, bountiful, etc.”** We see from these Scriptures, and those surrounding these verses, that the hand of the LORD was **“good”** and **“upon”** Nehemiah for the purpose of doing the Lord’s work. At this time it was to build the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah 2:18, Nehemiah told others about the hand of his God and how it was good upon him and it strengthened the people. Nehemiah attributed the favor that he had with king of Persia to the fact that the **“good hand of the Lord was upon him.”**

We ought not to attribute anything to the work of our own hands, not just salvation, but anything. Let us give the Lord the glory due unto His name, not luck, fate, stars aligning, but lifting up the Lord and saying, **“I have gotten this of the Lord’s good hand.”**

MIGHTY

“And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh’s bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand” (Deut. 6:20-21). God required Israel to speak to their children concerning the reason of all the laws, commands, and worship of

God. It was because of what God had done with His mighty hand. So is it so today. We must follow God’s Word because of what He did, namely our salvation—when He **“brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings”** (Ps. 40:2), which was done solely and wholly by His mighty hand.

The Lord spoke to Israel through Joshua after they had crossed over the river Jordan on dry ground. Observe, take note, behold what God said in Joshua 4:19-24. The purpose of which this was done was that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: **“that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever”** (Vv. 24). Again, our concern with examining the LORD is that it might strengthen our faith. And here, the LORD says that this act of His was done so that His people might fear Him forever. That it might instill in them a reverence, an awe of His being in them. Not for a fleeting moment, but forever. So that they might reply with faithful Abraham: **“Is anything too hard for the LORD”** (Gen. 18:14)? That we might reply **“NO!”**

WITH HIM

“And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him [meaning John the Baptist]” (Luke 1:66).

Acts 11:19-21—Vv. 21—**“And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord”** (Acts 11:21).

Here the Lord speaks of His hand as being **“with”** an individual(s) for the work of the Lord. Here the phrase **“Hand of the Lord was with him”** is used in reference of John the Baptist and

the Lord’s church. It is used in the sense as this is the power, the driving force, that secret power behind them. It is what gave them the ability to do the Lord’s work, and what brought about the results. John the Baptist would preach the gospel of the kingdom, the message of repentance unto every creature. Vile sinners, and religious sinners would come to him. He was to prepare the way of the Lord.

So, too, those of the Lord’s church who upon the persecution of Stephen went every where preaching the gospel of Christ. The Lord’s hand was with them. By His hand they overcame their fears, their own personalities, their own private struggles, their own ignorance and they declared **“Thus saith the Lord”** to every creature. We will need the hand of the Lord upon us for this great work of preaching the cross of Christ, declaring the whole counsel of God. AMEN!

NOT SHORTENED

Isaiah 59:1-3—here we find that God speaks to Israel of old. Israel had forsaken the Lord and had gone after other god’s. God sent forth prophets to them to steer them back to the narrow way of the Lord. But they had rejected the Word of the Lord by the mouth of the prophets. They had been chastened. Evidently, it had come into their hearts and minds that God’s hand was not able anymore.

Yet, the Lord lets His people know that His hand is not **“shortened”** or **“curtailed.”** Rather, the problem is not with the Hand of the Lord. Nor will there ever be an issue with the hand of the Lord. The problem lies with God’s people and our sins. I am sure you are familiar with the hymn *Nothing Between*.

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Little Hills

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Such is the case here. There must be nothing between us and the Lord. Here, the sins of the people made it so that God would not save them from the enemy without. They must first, repent, confess and forsake their false gods, their false ways.

His hand will never be shortened that it cannot save! Let us look inwardly to see if we have by our iniquities **“separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear”** (Isa. 59:2).

CLOSING

There are some great and glorious teachings about the hand of the Lord. Oh that we might behold them, examine His hands, look upon them, compare them to the hands of others that we might fear God forever (Joshua 4:24).



A Lodging Place

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the Old Testament tabernacle and temple; but, this verse also, I think, reminds us of the importance of the New Testament church of Jesus Christ. **“But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt”** (Deut. 16:6).

The Lord has given us a recourse to resist sin, when the world would allow us no respite. The Lord has given us brothers and sisters in Christ, with whom we can worship our only Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ – this fellowship and this devotion one to another is a great help, as we

travel in this lonely, sin-cursed realm. May God grant us a sincere desire to worship Him, exalt Him, gather around Him, and refresh our senses in the house (the church) of the living God! It is my firm belief that the church of Jesus Christ is the lodging place for wayfaring men and women today. And, if we, as the children of God, are going to find any respite in this life, then it will be within the confines and within the glorious walls of the church of Jesus Christ.



Yield Not To

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at our door, and another thing to come in. When temptation enters us, we have entered into temptation.

As soon as a man is converted he has temptation. No sooner is peace with God through faith in Christ settled in the court of conscience, than war is declared by Satan on the believer. As soon as a person is new-born and turns his face heavenward, he is confronted by Hell and must center into a life-long struggle with the Prince of Darkness. When the soul can be satisfied with nothing but a full departure from Egypt, from the bondage of sin, and that soul is firmly resolved to march to Canaan, then Satan, Pharaoh-like, pursue after the soul with horses and chariots of temptation. God has one Son without sin, but no sons without temptation!

THE SOURCE OF TEMPTATION

First, it must be said that God never tempts men to sin; therefore, no man can justly blame God for his sins. There is absolutely nothing in the nature of God that responds to evil, so He cannot be tempted with it. James wrote: **“Let**

no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man” (Jas. 1:13). Sin is entirely foreign to the very nature of God, and it is foolish to even think that He would tempt any man to commit evil. As God cannot be tempted with evil Himself, so neither can He be a tempter of others.

Second, temptation comes from our own lusts: **“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death”** (Jas. 1:14-15). The true source of temptation is the lusts of the human heart, the corrupt nature we received from Adam. If we give our lusts the least opportunity, they will draw us into sin. If there were no lusts in our flesh, there would be no temptation. The Devil and others may tempt us, yet the real trouble lies in our own breast.

Third, temptation often comes from the Tempter, Satan or the Devil. In I Thessalonians 3:5 Paul said: **“For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.”** From the context here, we can see that the apostle looked upon his persecution and temptations from the Jews being under the direction of Satan. He was being tempted by Satan to abandon his faith in order to avoid suffering. He was being tempted to murmur and complain for his persecutions from the Jews who sought to subvert his converts.

Satan is indeed a tempter, but he is charged with a great deal of mischief of which he is not guilty. Quiet often when a person sins, he will say, “The Devil made me do

it.” This is not true in every case. If a man is a drunkard, he will attempt to excuse his sin by saying that Satan tempted him. But when a man is bent by the whole stress of his nature to drunkenness, he needs no help from the Devil to be a drunkard. Some people are pathological liars, and they plead that Satan tempted them to lie. But when men are head-bent to lie, they need no temptation from Satan to lie. If a man wants to sin and will not be hindered from sinning, he will sin and needs no temptation from Satan. The Devil does not waste his time on such people, for he has more important things to do.

THINGS WHICH LEAD TO TEMPTATION

First, riches lead to temptation: **“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition”** (I Tim. 6:9; cf. Matt. 13:22). Note especially the words, **“will be rich,”** which implies an actual purpose and design to be rich by nook or crook. Such a man is not merely exposed to temptation, but he actually falls **“into temptation.”** His desire for riches will cause him to become entangled in the meshes of worldliness and dishonesty. He will become so fettered by cares and inordinate desires that he becomes a slave to riches. This will be injurious to both his body and soul.

Second, evil alliances lead to temptation: **“Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee”** (Ex. 34:12). God had declared war on the Canaanites, and Israel was not to sign a peace treaty with them. If God desired

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Small Drops

By Joseph M. Sidders of
Temperance, Michigan

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



THE WARMTH OF HOPE

In January of 2016 my wife and I woke up to the terrifying sight of our own breath. I ran to the thermostat to find that it was 52 degrees in our drafty old farm house and falling. Our house runs on a boiler heating system, or rather it always had until that morning. We quickly went into 'crisis-management mode,' grabbed our electric heater and ushered our three children into our bedroom with every blanket we could find. My wife started calling family for advice and I started looking up phone numbers for boiler mechanics.

One mechanic came out and told us that we would need to replace the entire unit at the tune of over \$12,000. The next said we seemed to have some sort of leak between the propane tank and the house which would surely be costly to repair and that he had never worked on a unit like ours before. Clearly these were not messages of great comfort.

For the children this was an adventure. "Mom and dad have discovered a problem and their solution is to keep us all close together! This is fantastic!" they said. They were in the same situation, suffering from the same conditions we were yet they were rejoicing. Our youngest was shivering but giggling with joy at the same time and our oldest, my son, was beaming with confidence that everything was going to be okay. He seemed eerily hopeful that warmth would soon return.

In Acts 27 Paul was on a ship, as a prisoner, being taken to Italy. As the weather started getting rough, this great ship was tossed. Paul gave counsel to the guard and recommended that if they were to continue, some may get hurt and the ship would be damaged. Unfortunately, much like the theme song that might be running through your head right now from "Gilligan's Island," this guard put his confidence in the courage of the fearless crew. As they sailed, a tempestuous wind picked up and forced them off course. The Bible calls this an "Euroclydon" or violent agitation. This is very similar to the Euroclydon that visited our household that morning!

This storm took them off course for days as they could not even identify their own whereabouts. The account describes that all hope that they should be saved was taken away. Have you been there? When all hope of getting the heat turned back on (without selling the very house your trying to heat) was lost?

Paul stood up in the middle of this frantic and desperate crew and told them to **"be of good cheer"** (Acts 27:25). As this crew began to fast and desperately wonder if this was how it would all end, Paul, their prisoner, stood and told them that, though the ship would be destroyed, no one would lose their life that day. Paul even sat them down for a meal. This was hope given to him from God Himself! Just as we were

enlightened by our children's outlook on our circumstances, Paul was able to encourage the very people who held him captive. His message, **"to be of good cheer,"** proved fruitful when 276 souls escaped death. They were tossed about for over two weeks, yet they were comforted by the warmth of hope.

My wife and I were strengthened by the sound of our children laughing in our time of great peril, and we took our situation to the Lord in prayer. A dear friend of ours from the church recommended another heating and cooling expert, and our heat was back on for less than \$300. **"Be of good cheer"** dear reader, for nothing can cool the warmth of hope!

YOU FIRST

How much easier is it to confidently do something after seeing someone else do it successfully? I grew up out in a country community with a creek that ran through most of our neighborhood. I remember going for a walk with my buddies, Jon and Andy. As we went deeper into the woods, we came to a point where we ran out of bank on one side of the creek and had to jump to the other side. Andy made the jump without hesitation. I quickly followed, making note of his foot placement on my side of the bank and where he safely landed on the other side. Jon, not wanting to be left behind, quickly made a leap without giving much thought to where we had leapt from nor the distance he would have to cover. This lack of planning resulted in a hard landing in the middle of the stream.

There is a certain confidence that comes from knowing someone else has accomplished a feat because it tells us that

it is possible. We should note however, that someone else's success does not always guarantee the path will be easy. Twenty-seven hundred individuals have successfully climbed to the top of Mount Everest since Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tenzing Norgay from Norway did it on May 29, 1953. Knowing it can be done may convince us that we certainly could do the same, but when we get into the details of the journey, we quickly find reason to hesitate. They planned and dreamed of their journey for years. They climbed for seven weeks (That is two months!). Before they had made it to the top, the world considered the mountain unclimbable. After their success, many made plans to traverse the near 30,000 feet of treachery themselves. None have found it to be easy.

In Luke 14:25-35 Jesus tells the group of folks following Him that they must be committed in order to continue following. He says in verse 27, **"Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."** He gives them two examples: one of a builder and his tower, and one of a king going to war. In both examples, he clearly describes the utter ruin each would be left with if they set out to do their tasks without first making detailed plans with a full commitment.

Jesus tells us that He is going first, making a way for us to follow Him. If we lack attention to the details Jesus forged for us, we will not successfully make the leap. Andy and I went before Jon, showing him the way. He was only left to follow. By refusing to follow our example, favoring his own way, he was left with wet socks and muddy shoes!

Understand that whatever

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Small Drops

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'creek' lies before you today may look deep. The bank on the other side may seem to be too long of a jump for you to make. Jesus' words of encouragement were "follow me." **"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).

The jump before you has already been made possible by the work finished upon the cross. Trust and follow Him.



Yield Not To

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to drive out the Canaanites, they were duty bound not to harbor them. There must be no unequal yoke uniting God's people with the Devil's people. We must reject all alliances, marriages, union meetings, invitations to counsel, how ever advantageous, and be a separate people unto the Lord. Any alliance between the righteous and the wicked greatly harms the righteous and greatly benefits the wicked.

Third, improper sex relations between husband and wife lead to temptation: **"Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come**

together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency" (I Cor. 7:3-5).

Husband and wife are to enjoy the pleasure of sex in the privacy of their own home. If the husband wants sex, the wife should not refuse, and vice versa. For one to defraud the other, opens the door for Satan to tempt the defrauded party to commit adultery. To avoid temptation, husband and wife are to maintain a balanced sex life so that both remain sexually satisfied.

Fourth, self-confidence leads to temptation: **"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There is no temptation taken you but such as is common to man. . ."** (I Cor. 10:12-13). The man who believes he is firm in the love of God and has the truth as it is in Christ feels he is secure from temptation. Such self-confidence is the strongest evidence that he is in grave danger of falling into temptation and dishonoring his profession of faith. The person who thinks he stands is not likely to keep his footing. But he is most safe who feels he is weak and feeble and feels the need of Divine strength and aid.

Fifth, idleness leads to temptation. King David was in a state of idleness when he saw Uriah's wife and eventually committed adultery with her (II Sam. 11:1-5). Had David been out on the battlefield with his soldiers where he belonged in time of war, he would not have been tempted to commit adultery. If a man is very busy, Satan may tempt him, but he will not easily prevail and may soon give up. Idle Christians are not tempted of the Devil so much as they tempt the Devil to tempt them.

GOD'S PROMISES TO THE TEMPTED

First, God has promised not to tempt us more than our capacity to resist: **"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"** (I Cor. 10:13). Our temptations are in proportion to our strength, and God will give us strength in proportion to our temptation.

A number of truths are to be gleaned in I Corinthians 10:13. First, all temptation which comes upon us is such as human nature has often been subjected to. Second, if we yield, we are responsible for our sins. Third, when a man is tempted it is because God permits it to take place. Fourth, God makes a way to escape simultaneous with the temptation. Fifth, God knows how much we can endure, and He will not put upon us more than we are able to bear.

Second, Jesus Christ is able to succor the tempted: **"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted"** (Heb. 2:18). The recollection of His own temptations make Christ mindful of the temptations of His people. As He was tried and tempted in all points, He is able to succor us in all possible temptations. He has infinite compassion and power, and He only waits to be called upon to help. What a sweet promise to the tempted and tried child of God!

Did you note the description of Christians in this verse? They are called **"them that are tempted."** We live in a tempting world. We are in enemy territory. The Devil is busy. The flesh is weak. The best of believers are subject

to temptations while upon the earth. Those who are tempted need support and succor. Thank God that Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, is able, ready, and willing to help those who under their temptations apply to Him. How thrilling to know that when our souls are most assaulted, it is then that they are most assisted by Christ!

Third, God has promised to deliver us in, not from, temptations: **"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished"** (II Pet. 2:9). Grievous temptations come on a Christian during his earthly pilgrimage. The difficulties may seem insurmountable. The situation may seem utterly hopeless with no ray of light. God's knowledge and power far excels ours, and He is never at a loss about ways and means to deliver His people. We may be utterly at a loss to find a way out, but He can find a way out and His way will prove to be the best way. There is no valley so dark but what God can find a way through it. There is not affliction so grievous but He can prevent it, remove it, or enable us to bear it and, in the end, overrule it for our good and His glory.

Fourth, the Lord has promised rewards to those who overcome temptation: **"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"** (Jas. 1:12; cf. 1:2; I Pet. 1:6-7). Not the falling into divers temptations is a matter of joy, but the enduring of them to the end is such. We must weather the storm. After we are tested and approved, and have demonstrated

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Narrow Paths

By Doug Newell IV of
Clendenin, West Virginia

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

NO BEAUTY IN CHRIST?

"For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isa. 53:2).

Isaiah paints a dry and desolate landscape. A twig breaks out of the parched earth; a small sucker climbs heavenward. A living vine where it is least expected. The picture shows the promised Messiah will be born in David's lineage. As Isaiah writes, the days of David's sons on the throne are numbered. At the dawn of the New Testament, from all outward appearances, the line is lifeless, dry ground. However, the appearance is deceiving. God's promises will not fail. From the dry ground will grow the Tender Plant, the Righteous branch from Jesse's root, son of David.

When Christ came, He was not born in a palace but a manger. He was not welcomed by royalty but persecuted. The Herod did not honor the birth of Christ but tried to end His life. Christ was born in poverty, secluded in youth, reared in an infamous town. Despite images on painted canvas, Jesus' face did not glow as he walked on the Earth, and a halo did not adorn His brow. He looked like an ordinary man. Nothing in His features denoted glory.

"And when we shall see him." Jesus came and lived in Israel. Jesus healed, preached, ate, and

drank in the presence of Israel. And they saw Him. Our celebrity culture gets excited when a famous person is around. Out come the phones and the selfies and posts to prove we were in the presence of the rich and famous. Israel did not see a famous poet, or a renowned artist, but the Christ. They looked upon His face and they saw no beauty. God's people looked upon the Lord of glory, whom the Father was well pleased, and saw no beauty in Him. In the flesh, there was nothing any different than any other man in the region. The priests needed Judas to point out which man was Christ when he betrayed Him.

Oh, but how lovely is the Lord of glory! He is beautiful in His holiness. He is glorious in His perfection. He is majestic in His power. Do you see beauty in Christ? Do you see anything in the Lord to desire Him? Years ago, I saw nothing desirable in Christ. He was a man in a book, but as far as having any personal feelings toward Him? No, a stranger more than anything else. But when God showed me my sinfulness, and I saw the darkness of my heart and the filth of my sin, I beheld the Lord Jesus, nailed to the cross for my sins, and I saw all the desire of my heart. No longer a stranger, but a Saviour. No longer just a man, but the Godman. No longer a man in the book, but the Word of God incarnate.



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our love for Christ, we shall one day receive the crown of life. The tempted believer who endures shall be the crowned one at the judgment seat of Christ.

SAFEGUARDS AGAINST TEMPTATION

First, those who keep the Word of God are kept from temptation: **"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth"** (Rev. 3:10). Those who keep the Word of Christ in consistency and constancy will be kept from the hour of temptation. God will not leave those who have not left His Word. The ultimate fulfillment of this awaits the rapture and the tribulation. These words prove that Christ will deliver His churches from the trial as well as the period of time in which the trial occurs.

Second, we should strive to avoid temptations: **"Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away"** (Prov. 4:14-15; cf. 1:10, 15-16). Those who walk in the way they should go must never turn aside into the way they should not go. Do not try the evil way even for a brief trial, for it may prove a dangerous experiment from which retreat is difficult. Keep a great distance from sin and sinners. Never think you can get far enough from them.

I Thessalonians 5:22 says: **"Abstain from all appearance of evil."** If you would not be drowned, do not go near the waterside. If you would not be wounded, stay out of the camp of the enemy. If you would escape the

plague, do not breathe the germs. If you would avoid burning down the house, don't strike a match. If you would not sink the ship, do not knock a hole in its side. If you do not wish to be known as an evil man, then shun the very appearance of evil.

Third, we are to resist temptation: **"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand, stand therefore. . ."** (Eph. 6:13-14). Temptation when it first begins to act upon us may be easily overcome, if we put on all the Christian armor. But if we put on only a part of the armor, we leave some parts of the body exposed to the enemy. When we do this we can expect to be hit by one of Satan's fiery darts. However, if we put on all the armor and resist Satan steadfastly, he will retreat in defeat and the temptation will fade away.

Fourthly, we can pray for deliverance from temptations. In the example prayer which Christ taught His disciples He told them to pray: **"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"** (Matt. 6:13). It is not wrong to pray that God will not allow us to be tempted to sin. The very command to pray for deliverance presupposes that God has such control over the tempter so as to save us from his power if we call upon Him. Therefore let us pray: "Lord, do not let Satan loose upon us. Do not leave us to ourselves (Ps. 19:13), for we are weak and liable to enter into temptation. Lord, keep us from the evil of sin and the evil of our nature."

THE WHY OF TEMPTATION

First, we are tempted that our character may be tested to prove

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our usefulness for the Master. A test is never employed for the purpose of injury. We do not know how much patience, or courage, or zeal, or faith that we have until we are proved by temptation. We are what we are when we are tempted. Only after a man is tried and tempted by Satan can he become fit for the Master's use. Who would have known of the faith of Abraham, the patience of Job, and Paul's courage, if they had never been tempted? Who would have known the invincible piety of the three Hebrews, if there had been no furnace to try them? Who would have known of the steadfastness of Daniel, if there had been no lions' den?

Second, temptation is designed to make us stronger Christians. A man must cherish and protect a young plant, but when it grows and gets bigger he leaves it to the wind and weather. Even so, God cares much for His little children, but afterward as they become young men He exposes them to the wind and weather of temptations to make them stronger and stronger. Let no man think he is blessed because he is free of temptations. It is because God sees that he is too weak to bear these trials. Therefore we should wish to be tempted: **"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations"** (Jas. 1:2). Heaven help us when there is nothing in us worth the Devil's effort!

Third, temptations are hopeful evidence that God loves us and His grace is in us. A thief makes his fiercest assault upon a house filled with rich treasure. Even so, Satan makes his most savage attack upon those who possess much treasure in their earthen

vessels. A tempted soul may say this to himself: "If God were not my friend, Satan would not so much be my enemy. If there were not something of God within me, Satan would never make such attempts to storm me. If the love of God was not in my heart, Satan would never shoot so many fiery darts at me. If the heart of God was not toward me, the hand of Satan would not be so strong against me."

Fourth, temptations are at their worst but temporary. Let us be encouraged in our temptations. The conflict may be fierce, but it will not be for long. Let old Satan do his worst, for when a few more rolling suns pass over our heads, he will be gone for ever to the lake of fire. The dark clouds and rolling thunder over our heads are soon to be followed by fair weather and eternal sunshine of glory. Let us put on the whole armor and keep the battlefield a few more days, for soon the battle will terminate and the victory will be won.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE TEMPTED

What should be our attitude toward those who fall in the time of temptation? Are we to kick them farther down the hill? Are we to give them up to the Devil? No, never! We must deal tenderly with those who fall into the Devil's trap: **"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted"** (Gal. 6:1). The man Paul speaks of here has been brought into sin by a surprise of temptation in a weak moment. It is one thing to be overtaken in a fault and another to overtake a fault! A true Christian does not deliberately sin, but he may be surprised by temptation and fall into sin.

It is the responsibility of those who have escaped such temptation and are under the influence of the Holy Spirit to reclaim and restore the fallen brother. The original word signifies to set in joint a dislocated bone. This must be done in a kind, loving, humble, forbearing and forgiving spirit. Those who seek to restore the backslider must remember that they are liable to be overtaken in a fault. It is possible we might even be tempted to commit the same sin which we seek to amend in others!

CONCLUSION

Do you feel weak? Then remember that your God is strong. A feeble child, who cannot go it alone, clings fast to the hand of his father, more trusting to him to help than his own strength. Let us do so to our heavenly Father, and say with the psalmist: **"Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not"** (Ps. 17:5). On another occasion he said: **"Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope. Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually"** (Ps. 119:116-117).

Whether we would overcome, or whether we would prevent temptation, let us take our temptations and dip them in the blood of Jesus. Let us never rest alone in our ability. Let us never stand and wonder what to do when we are assaulted by the Evil One. God grant that we may look to the slain Lamb upon the throne. May we set the Lord always before our eyes, His all-sufficiency, His fullness, His grace, His goodness, His willingness to succor us when we are tempted.

The song writer has written:

Yield not to temptation,

For yielding is sin;

*Each victory will help you
Some other to win;
Fight manfully onward,
Dark passions subdue;
Look ever to Jesus,
He'll carry you through.*

*Shun evil companions,
Bad language disdain,
God's name hold in reverence,
Nor take it in vain;
Be thoughtful and earnest,
Kind-hearted and true;
Look ever to Jesus,
He'll carry you through.*

*To him that o'ercometh,
God giveth a crown
Thro' faith we will conquer,
Though often cast down;
He who is our Saviour,
Our strength will renew;
Look ever to Jesus,
He'll carry you through.*



Paul's Greatest

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means all the "sons" for those identified as illegitimate sons are not chastened.) Neither did inspiration make an inspired writer perfect for it is the Scriptures that are inspired and not the men. The Scriptures are, literally, the breathing of God while **"...holy men of God spake as they were moved [borne along] by the Holy Ghost"** (II Peter 1:21). Thus carried along by the Holy Spirit what they wrote was free from error.

Let me offer further proof that apostleship did not keep men from making mistakes. In Acts 14:14 both Paul and Barnabas are plainly stated to have been apostles. And yet the Bible records a disagreement between those two apostles that was so great they parted ways. It is written:

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Paul's Greatest

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“And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God” (Acts 15:37-40).

Which of these two apostles was at fault? Were both at fault? The Bible says “Barnabas determined to take Mark” and “Paul thought not good to take him with them.” John Mark was the young nephew of Barnabas. Paul’s reason for opposing Barnabas on this matter was that on their previous evangelistic journey John Mark had come back home before the trip was completed. Evidently Paul thought him to be undependable and untrustworthy. This event was described as a contention that “was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other.” The Greek word for contention has come across to us in English and is “paroxysm.” Medically a paroxysm is a “fit” otherwise the word means “a sudden strong feeling or expression of emotion that cannot be controlled.” Did these two apostles lose control over this matter? Strong uncontrolled feelings between two apostles: somebody was at fault. Somebody made a mistake. Perhaps both Barnabas and Paul were at fault. By the way, later Paul would write to Timothy and say, **“Only Luke is with me. Take**

Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry” (II Tim. 4:11). The breach of fellowship was repaired after a time and John Mark was said to be “profitable.”

Other mistakes of apostles could be cited, for instance when both Barnabas and Peter were carried away with the Judaizers being confronted by the circumcision party. (See Galatians 2:11-14). This is the instance where Paul withstood Peter to his face in rebuking him. Both the apostles, Barnabas and Peter were to be blamed for their mistake.

Having shown that apostleship did not guarantee that an apostle could not make a mistake let us go on to consider what this preacher believes was Paul’s greatest mistake and one from which he learned: and one from which all God’s men and His churches should learn. For a full reading of the scriptural context you may wish to read Acts 17:16 – 18:18. It is mostly from these verses that we shall quote.

Early on in Paul’s first evangelistic tour he came to Athens. We are told: **“Now while Paul waited for them [Silas and Timothy] at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons [Gentile proselytes to the Jewish religion], and in the market daily with them that met with him”** (Acts 17:16-17). Certain persons who were considered philosophers took note of Paul and brought him to the Areopagus, also known as Mars Hill. This was said to be the highest court in Athens. There they began to question him about his doctrine.

It should be noted that these pagan Athenians were nothing

more than what appears to have been a group of intellectuals or pseudo-intellectuals for we read about them: **“For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing”** (Acts 17:21). Novel ideas were their entertainment. They were not serious about the truth and certainly not the things of God. In this case Paul was their entertainment for the moment.

Paul begins to reason with these men by stating that he was preaching to them about the “unknown God” whose altar he had seen by the way. An analysis of his sermon, if it can rightly be called that, shows it to be human reasoning, philosophy and intellectual in its approach until Paul reaches the teaching of the resurrection. In his sermon Paul quotes from one of the pagan Athenian poets, but never quotes the Scriptures. This is noteworthy. What he says is true, but his preaching was an intellectual approach wherein he tried to reason with these men. The result of his sermonizing in this way was that the doctrine of the resurrection was mocked. Only a few, it seems, **“clave unto him, and believed.”** Soon after this we are told **“After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth”** (Acts 18:1). No church was founded in Athens. It seems that Paul’s assessment of the situation in Athens was that he had failed. This preacher believes that the Lord impressed upon Paul the futility of trying to make converts by the intellectual approach. Human means cannot produce spiritual results!

Upon his arrival in Corinth, the next city on his tour, Paul joins himself to two other tent makers, laboring with Aquila and

Priscilla, and began reasoning in conversation with both Jews and Greeks in the synagogue. The word used for “reasoned” is “dialegomai” akin to our English word dialogue. But after Silas and Timothy caught up with him there in Corinth we read that **“Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ”** (Acts 18:5). Upon the arrival of his co-workers, Paul begins to openly preach. The result of his preaching that Jesus was the Messiah (for that is the meaning of the word Christ) was that the majority of the Jews in that place turned against him. This is the point at which Paul turned to the Gentiles and gathered a congregation made up of both a few Jews and a majority of Gentiles. After spending a year and six months there (Acts 18:11 and **“after this tarried there yet a good while,”** Acts 18:18). Paul then left an established congregation properly organized under the authority of the congregation that sent him out. (See Acts 13:1-4).

Later Paul would write to this congregation in Corinth. He would remind them of his behavior among them from the first until he left them. His words were these: **“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: {enticing: or, persuasible} **That your faith****

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Is Zechariah 8 referring to Israelites preaching to other Jews, or are the Gentiles included also?

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My answer to the question is yes and no! Chapter 8 is not referring to the Israelites preaching to other Jews. But yes the Gentiles are included in what is going on here in this chapter. Before I continue, this verse needs a thorough answer in which there is not enough room in the Forum to answer this question that would do it justice, as far as I am concerned. So I will give the questioner a brief synopsis of what I believe chapter 8 is referring to.

Zechariah compared Israel's past judgment with the promised future restoration. In light of past captivity, the nation was to repent and live righteously, and as well as promised blessings, they were to do the same, repent and live righteously. There are two messages here (vv. 1-17 and 18-23). Both look positively to the future, when Israel will be brought to a place of special blessing, where their fasts will become feasts.

In verses 20-22 we can see Israel restored in Millennial Glory (I believe chapter 8 is referring to the Millennial Kingdom). This will be the means of blessing to the entire world (Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-5). Before I continue, remember that there will be no lost person that will enter the Millennial

Kingdom. And this is where the Gentiles come in who will also be in the Millennial Kingdom along with the Jews.

Gentiles from around the world will make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to beseech the Lord. This signifies salvation of people all over the world during the Millennial Kingdom, fulfilling Psalm 122.

Remember also, that children will be born during Christ's thousand year reign. And some will be saved and some will not, these children will still be born with a depraved nature or Revelation 20:7-10 would not make any sense.

In verse 23, "In those days" means, in the days in which the Messianic Kingdom on earth is initiated (Joel 3:18), the Jews will truly be God's messengers as originally intended, and will bring multitudes to Christ. There will be a vast number of Gentiles who will come also. The Messiah, in the midst of Millennial Israel, will be the attraction of the world. People, seeing the Jews so blessed in their kingdom, (much like the Gentiles of today) will demand to go and meet the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

I wish people would be more demanding today to see Jesus. It would be so great to have people breaking down the church doors to get in to hear about Jesus. "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of

God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11). Oh glorious day! God Bless!

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The book of Zechariah is an awesome book with relevant, current instructions for the Jewish remnant returning from Babylon by Cyrus, King of Persia's decree. Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah figure prominently in this promised and prophesied first return of God's people to their native land. But there are over-arching prophesies that run much deeper and make Zechariah a prophet of the restoration of Israel in the end times, as well, which could very well be our times- beginning with the post World War II gathering of Israel into an independent nation in 1948. Selah! Think about it!

That being said, the eighth chapter of Zechariah is particularly a prophecy of the Millennial Reign and eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ that will be centered on the city of Jerusalem. Much more potent than the "governorship" of Nehemiah's time, the first five verses state God's intended return to eventually be that of "Kingship" and rule of power in His Holy Mountain/Kingdom. "Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain" (Zech. 8:3), (Mountain here in the Old Testament Hebrew, typically has reference to "kingdom" and

consolidated authority.). I love the thought in the next couple of verses that picture a time of peace and prosperity, where the citizens grow old and watch the carefree "boys and girls" play in the street. How much more awesome a picture of blessed prosperity could one write in just two verses. Amen! Praise the Lord!

Isaiah 11 (another Millennial chapter) also proclaims a SECOND return to Jerusalem. Particularly, as seen in verses 11-13, it is from not just Babylon, but the four corners (compass points) of the (round, not flat) Earth that will specifically include Ephraim/Israel, not just Judah/Jews. "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country" (Zech. 8:7). Note the promise here is to Judah and Israel. "And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong" (Zech. 8:13). The immediate building of God's house is going to be accomplished by Zerubbabel and the Jews, but there is coming a millennial temple that will be built by both houses of Judah and Israel. Selah! Think about it!

"These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD" (Zech. 8:16-17). The righteous living and righteous words of God's people are to be witness to those neighbors (both unbelieving Israeli's and

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Is Jeremiah 10:1-5 speaking of a wooden carved idol that people worshipped or something else?

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There is no doubt that the prophet is speaking of idolatry in this passage. The heathen Babylonians were fond of worshipping the stars and signs in the heavens (v. 2). They were also guilty of cutting down trees and carving them into idols. They would deck them with plates of silver and gold and fasten them with nails. Jeremiah is warning the Israelites to learn not the way of the heathen, nor to fear their idols because they had no power whatsoever (v. 5).

The description of the idol in this passage sounds an awful lot like the Xmas trees a lot of folks like to put up around the time of the winter solstice. Most folks claim that they do this to help celebrate and commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ, but I can not find anything in the Scriptures to support this practice. There is no record of Jesus Christ, the apostles, or the early churches ever using a decorated tree to help celebrate or remember the birth of Jesus Christ. In fact, there is no command or admonition in Scripture that promotes the practice.

Historically, the Baal bush, ahem Xmas tree, is borrowed from ancient heathen worship during the winter solstice. The

Roman Catholic Church simply incorporated the heathen practice into their manufactured celebration of Xmas. There is no scriptural proof whatsoever that Jesus Christ was born on December 25th, but the Papacy decreed it as so and most religious people just accept the premise and everything that goes along with it.

During the month of December when people at least pay lip service to some notion of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, I make it a special point of emphasis to preach Christ crucified, buried and risen again. **"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel (I Cor. 9:16).**

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I remember my Dad telling the story of being a teenager and tromping out into the woods with an unsaved father, and that they would be among a great multitude that **"...cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go..."** The obvious picture in Jeremiah

10:3-5 is plain, is it not? Just add the words "Merry X-mass" and this passage is indistinguishable from modern holiday blasphemy.

God's clear admonition from this passage (the first direct commandment) is: **"...Learn not the way of the heathen..."** The conclusion of this perilous passage is also just exactly what every Baptist needs to hear and consider. **"...Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good."** It is still just a tree, is it not? Search the pages of Holy Writ in vain for instructions for God's people to glorify Him with a decorated tree. It seems that the most common excuse of X-mass celebrations by folks that really ought to know better, is this excuse that some "good" can be done by their "observance/celebration," but not according to Jeremiah, the weeping prophet. Selah! Think about it!

It is interesting that some might confuse this clear passage on the Baal-bush, as perhaps speaking of a wooden, carved idol that the heathen-influenced Jews might be worshipping. Clearly, the passage spells out those X-mass Eve rites of propping up this severed tree with hammers and nails. Holding it upright as a palm tree, and decking it with silver and gold. If one could ignore this clarity, and call it a "wooden stock idol," then they could condemn such a terrible act, yet still continue blithely on with the evergreen tree decorations come December. "No, I am not worshipping this tree! It is not an idol! I am worshipping the God of the tree, and His birthday!" It really does not fly, though, because the heathen is not worshipping the tree, either; he is worshipping the "god" of his tree, too. Question, what does the tree stand for, for you?

"Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee. But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock is a doctrine of vanities" (Jer. 10:6-8). Those first five verses are just a parabolic picture showing the shameless futility of X-mass worshippers of all generations from Babylon to Israel to the hills of Kanawha County, West Virginia, (Definition: a parable is a familiar physical picture painted in our ears to understand a spiritual principle.). As we think about the X-mass trees proliferating so many front picture windows across America, God says that it is an empty doctrine. The "brutish and foolish" are ignoring the greatness of our Lord and His name. They neglect to fear the King of all nations. His way of worship is insufficient for them, but they must add to the Word of God. The all-powerful "spirit of X-mass" must be added to complete our year. Jeremiah calls this X-mass tree a "doctrine of vanities" in the eighth verse. The word "stock" (Hebrew- "ets") means tree or wood. Actually the first time this Hebrew word is used, is in the 11th verse of the Bible. **"And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit (ets) tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so"** (Gen. 1:11). Now that original tree brings glory to God. Actually, that pine tree pa-paw cut out of the forest with my teen-age Dad's help was

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Forum #1

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Gentiles) round about. As the Great Tribulation ends, the Lord is going to pour out saving grace upon the surviving remnant of Jacob's children. Romans 11:26-27, in combination with Zechariah 12:10-13:2, speaks of the irresistible grace of God being applied without distinction upon the remnant of the election of grace. **"And so all Israel shall be saved..."**

The last five verses of Zechariah 8 speak to the Millennial superiority of the Israelis. Jerusalem will be the world-wide center of God's promised physical kingdom. Christ will rule with a **"rod of iron"** along with a resurrected David and all the inhabitants of the Earth will come to worship in the new capital city. **"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it"** (Rev. 21:23-24). **"And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them...and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. ...and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. ...And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel,**

when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore" (Ez. 37:22-28). Selah!

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The context of Zechariah chapter 8 points to the time when the elect nation of Israel will be regenerated and restored to her land during the Millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ will reign on the earth from Jerusalem during the thousand years. Jeremiah also prophesied of this time and place as well: **"At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart... Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS"** (Jer. 3:17; 23:5-6). Converted Jews will play a major role during Christ's millennial reign. In Zechariah 8:20-23 it appears that Gentiles from all over the world will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD of hosts. Converted Jews who are rejoicing in their Messiah will gladly share the finished work of Jesus Christ with others. So the answer is yes, converted

Jews will be used by God in the work of evangelism among the Gentiles during the Millennial reign. Psalm 72 speaks of Christ's Millennial reign and the context clearly implies that people will be saved and redeemed during that 1000 years time period. **"In his days shall the righteous flourish: and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth...Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. For he shall DELIVER the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and SHALL SAVE the souls of the needy. He shall REDEEM their soul from deceit and violence..."** (Psa. 72:7-8; 11-14, emphasis mine TWR). The Millennial reign of Jesus Christ will be the most spiritually powerful time the inhabitants of the earth will have ever experienced in all of human history.

TOM ROSS



Forum #2

(Continued from page 13) ♦

bringing glory to God, until it was marred by the efforts of idolatrous Americans. Bible Truth: "...the (decorated) tree is a doctrine of vanities!" (vs. 8)

May God help us to read the Word with prayerful trembling. Do not go get a tree out of the woods anymore (or buy a fake one in a store). **"Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you"** (Jer. 10:1). The Bible is a fascinating book of relevant pictures, parables and straightforward doctrine. God is not trying to fool anyone. It is pretty clear that man is the

one that tries to fool God, and I do not think that is going to work. **"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is"** (I Cor. 3:13). Selah! Think about it!

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"Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake. Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God? But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them" (Ps. 115:1-8).

Yes, Jeremiah 10:1-5 is talking about a carved idol. They would cut a tree out of the forest and fashion it in the form of a man or some other creature. I used to think this verse was talking about our modern day Christmas tree, but further study shows it is not. But, I believe people do cut a tree down out of the forest and deck

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Forum #2

(Continued from page 14) ♦

it with silver and gold and make the Christmas tree a god in many ways as they celebrate the holiday season, which I hate.

As much as I would like to use these verses of Scripture to forbid Christmas I cannot because Christmas was not yet instituted until many years after the birth of Christ. "Christmas" is a shortened form of "Christ's mass" (Catholic holiday). It is derived from the Middle English Cristemasse, which is from Old English Crīstesmæsse, a phrase first recorded in 1038 followed by the word Cristesmesse in 1131. Crīst (genitive Crīstes) is from Greek Khrīstos, a translation of Hebrew Māšîaḥ, "Messiah," meaning "anointed"; and mæsse is from Latin missa, the celebration of the Eucharist.

To put it bluntly, Christians should run from this holiday as far as they can run. If one would truly study its true origin, one would find it has its origin from Ancient Babylon Religion. It is a pagan/heathen holiday that has NOTHING to do with Christ's birth. Other than originating from Ancient Babylon it is simply a Catholic holiday in which a Baptist should have no business doing.

To continue to answer the question, Gentiles worshipped celestial bodies, including the sun, moon, and stars. Idols were often carved from wood (v. 3) and ornamented with gold or silver (cf. v. 9). Some were molded from clay (Judg. 18:17; Isa. 42:17). Jeremiah 10:3-5 points out the impossibility of such non-existent gods punishing or rewarding humans.

God hates idolatry and He makes it very clear in the very

first commandment: **"And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments"** (Ex. 20:1-6).

Again let me point out that I believe that even though Jeremiah is not referring to the Christmas tree, Christians should heed the warning because that is what people do. They go into the forest, cut down a tree, (and let us not be ignorant here, you may not, but someone cuts down a tree to sell it to you) and then they fasten it so it does not move or fall down and then they decorate it with silver and gold.

The cry goes out, "But I do not worship it," then do not do it at all because I, for one, believe otherwise.

If you study this you will come to the same conclusion as many of our Baptist people have. The problem is many do not want to know the truth because they like doing it and I will be the first to admit, people will hate you for not celebrating Christmas. God Bless!

ROGER REED



Paul's Greatest

(Continued from page 11) ♦

should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (I Cor. 2:1-5 complete with KJV marginal note).

The depth of meaning behind Paul's words can only be fully understood and appreciated if we consider his words in light of the mistake he had made in Athens. Immediately after leaving Athens he came to Corinth with a determination **"not to know any thing"** among them **"save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."** He reminded the Corinthians that he **"came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom."** He simply declared unto them **"the testimony of God."** Surely this means he cited the Scriptures as proof for his teaching. His words were not "persuasive" (KJV margin). Merriam Webster says "persuasive" means persuadable. Paul did not make use of human reasoning, philosophy, psychology, or any other means to attempt to persuade the Corinthians. He simply preached to them **"the testimony of God."** Had he used human persuasion his converts would have been the result of human reasoning. He refused to do that. Rather he preached Christ: i.e. that Jesus is the Messiah.

Dear ones in Christ: if the simple preaching of the Word of God will not convert the sinner whom God regenerates: if it will not accomplish what God wants to accomplish we most certainly shall not do it by human means. A significant number of Baptist preachers of various Baptist subspecies have become seminary trained in philosophy, psychology, sociology, and have entered Baptist pulpits as men capable of artificial motivation by various means. Coupled with

musical entertainment and a host of worldly methods they have met with little success if success is measured by the faithful devotion of their converts to Christ and holy living. A few have maintained super-size congregations by enticing the passing numbers of the religious herd that comes and goes from year to year as they tire of religious entertainment and other things appeal to them. While all this is going on the sheep hunger and are scattered on the mountains. Can you not view them as Jesus did? **"But 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).

Thank God for the few men, God's men, who search the Scriptures seeking manna with which to feed the flock over which God has made them overseers. Thank God that Paul saw his mistake in Athens and carried out his determination to preach the Word of God, letting the chips fall where they may. And there were others in Paul's day and since – down through the centuries – men who have faithfully taught God's Word, having compassion on the scattered sheep and concern for the glory of God and His Christ!

God's men may not be many today, but they shall be mighty as long as they preach the mighty Word of God. Brethren: **"...though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)"** (II Cor. 10:3-4). Let us ever flee from any taint of the methodology of this world that we might be faithful ministers of Christ!



THE BIBLE AND THE 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.

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT TO CONSIDER: CAN CHRISTIAN ARTISTS BE JAILED FOR VIEWS?

CH--The Arizona Supreme Court Tuesday agreed to hear a case involving two Christian artists who could face fines and jail time if they don't create artwork celebrating same-sex weddings. Joanna Duka and Breanna Koski own Brush & Nib Studio and create custom artwork using painting, calligraphy and handlettering for weddings and other events. But because of their Christian faith, they won't make custom artwork celebrating same-sex weddings. Under a Phoenix ordinance, Duka and Koski could be jailed for up to six months and/or fined \$2,500 each day they are in violation if they refuse to design artwork for a same-sex couple who requests wedding announcements or invitations. They sued in state court seeking to overturn the ordinance, but lost at the court of appeals. They then appealed to the Arizona Supreme Court.

PRO-CHOICE GROUPS DEFEND 'BARBARIC' DISMEMBERMENT ABORTION

CH--A federal appeals court heard arguments this month on a Texas abortion law that outlaws a procedure in which a late-term unborn baby is torn apart, limb by limb, to prevent a live birth. The medical term for the procedure is "dilation and evacuation," although it's been dubbed "dismemberment

abortion" by pro-life groups because it involves pulling out an arm, a leg, and so forth. A lower court issued a temporary restraining order preventing the Texas law from going into effect. The U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals heard arguments Nov. 5. Heather Gebelin Hacker, assistant solicitor general for Texas, called the procedure "barbaric" and said abortionists could use other methods instead. "It's illegal to kill an animal that way in Texas, we wouldn't execute a murderer that way, and notably the abortion providers don't tell women that that's what the procedure entails," Hacker told the judges, according to The Texas Tribune.

The Los Angeles Times editorial board criticized supporters of the law for "describing the procedure in ghoulish detail." The board also argued that the unborn baby -- despite being in the second trimester -- does not feel pain. The procedure, the board said, is medically necessary. Nicole Russell, a columnist for The Washington Examiner, expressed incredulity at the arguments by pro-choicers. "The fact that there was not only an argument in a courtroom claiming that pulling limbs from a baby wasn't actually dismemberment or inhumane but necessary and well within a woman's rights, but that folks like those on the LA Times editorial board agreed, shows just how far abortion advocates are willing to go to protect abortion, one of the most sacrosanct ideas within the progressive party," Russell wrote. "To them, Roe v. Wade is not merely

a law, but it represents a lifestyle, a right, and a movement which defies science, dignity, and the rights of the least among us."

11-YEAR-OLD 'TRAILBLAZING' CHILD DRAG QUEEN PROMOTED ON GOOD MORNING AMERICA

CH--ABC's Good Morning America celebrated an 11-year-old drag queen as a trailblazer this month, although many viewers pushed back and said the show had crossed the line in sexualizing children. The show introduced a video of Desmond Napoles -- also known as "Desmond Is Amazing" -- by saying the child was "inspiring to many" and was "trailblazing" a path for other children. Strahan also called it an "amazing story." Moments later, after the video, the boy strutted down a runway toward the Good Morning America set, wearing a blonde wig and a yellow and white dress. Napoles performs throughout New York City as a drag queen. He wore women's clothes and marched at a gay pride event at age 8.

HOUSE DEMOCRATS BAND TOGETHER, THREATEN HOBBY LOBBY SUPREME COURT RULING

CH--Following the midterm elections, which turned control of the House over to the Democrats, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act may be in jeopardy. According to CBN News, 50 more Democrats have decided to band together to co-sponsor legislation that would destroy the 25-year-old Act. This increase in support brings the total number of Democratic Congressmen opposing the act to 172. Signed into law in 1993 by President Bill Clinton, the RFRA works to protect employers' religious liberty by rejecting the idea that employers are required to provide medical insurance coverage

for abortion-inducing contraception. According to The Washington Examiner, the bill Democratic congressmen are moving to support, H.R. 3222, would make it so LGBT rights and other progressive causes would trump religious freedom. The outlet also states that if the H.R. 3222 is passed into law it would reverse Supreme Court's rulings in the Hobby Lobby and Masterpiece Cakeshop cases. "Pushing this are progressive groups which claim that religious beliefs are just a cover for discrimination, bigotry, and hate," the Examiner writes. Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-HI), who supports the bill, said during a meeting last month by the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution that she was more concerned with the appearing "school of thought that weaponizes religious liberty" than about preserving conscience protections. Conversely, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) called Democrats' support for the bill a blatant and obvious attack on first amendment right to freedom of religion.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION MAY HALT \$100 MILLION IN FETAL TISSUE RESEARCH

CH--The Department of Health and Human Services is considering the cancellation of more than \$100 million in medical research contracts involving fetal tissue. The fetal tissue is obtained from miscarriages and legal abortions and is necessary for developing cures and vaccines, supporters say. Opponents, though, say the research is unethical. They also believe there are ethical alternatives. HHS earlier this year ended a contract with Advanced Bioscience Resources, a company that provided fetal tissue to researchers. Pro-life groups applauded the move. "So long as HHS trades taxpayer dollars for freshly-aborted baby body parts, the U.S. government is setting

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its own abortion quotas and sending the message that these children are worth more dead than alive,” said David Daleiden, project lead with The Center for Medical Progress.

ALABAMA, WEST VIRGINIA VOTERS LAY GROUNDWORK TO OUTLAW ABORTION

CH--Voters in Alabama and West Virginia passed constitutional amendments Tuesday that could result in abortion being outlawed if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*. Alabama voters, by a margin of 59-41, approved an amendment to the state constitution that recognizes and supports “the sanctity of unborn life and the rights of unborn children, including the right to life.” It also states that “nothing” in the state constitution “secures or protects a right to abortion or requires the funding of an abortion.” In West Virginia, voters passed an amendment, 52-48 percent, that says “nothing in this Constitution secures or protects a right to abortion or requires the funding of abortion.” Both amendments would make it easier to ban abortion in the two states if *Roe* is overturned. That’s because state courts would be unable to legalize abortion by using the state constitutions.

SCHOOL DISTRICT BANS FCA FROM MEETING WHEN OTHER CLUBS DO, LEGAL GROUP SAYS

CH--A Kentucky school district is violating the U.S. Constitution by preventing members of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes from meeting during school hours and by banning its announcements over the PA system and from bulletin boards, a legal group alleges. First Liberty Institute sent a letter to the Hardin County School District in

late October, alleging that the FCA is prohibited from meeting during school hours even though other groups, such as the photography club, are allowed to do so. The letter further says that the FCA isn’t allowed to post its announcements on bulletin boards or use the public announcement system -- privileges given to other clubs. The school policy was adopted in reaction to demands from the group Atheists of America, the letter says. “The singling out of students involved with FCA is exactly the kind of hostility toward religion that the law prevents,” said Roger Byron, senior counsel for First Liberty Institute. “Hardin County school officials are acting like they are above federal law. They must treat students who are members of FCA equally.” The letter says the school district’s policy violates the Equal Access Act and other state and federal laws “by discriminating against students ‘on the basis of the religious . . . content of the speech at such meetings.’” The policy infringes on constitutionally protected rights, too, First Liberty alleges.

MALE P.E. TEACHER TOLD TO MONITOR GIRL SHOWERING OR LOSE JOB, GROUP SAYS

TBT--A male P.E. teacher could lose his job at a Florida middle school because he refused administrators’ demands to supervise the showers where a biological girl could be showering with boys, according to a legal group. The biological girl at Chasco Middle School in Port Richey, Fla., claims to be a transgender boy and was given access by the administration to the boys’ bathroom and locker room “with no forewarning” to the boys or their parents, Liberty Counsel said in a letter to the Pasco County School Board. Both P.E. teachers, Robert Oppedisano and Stephanie Christensen, objected to the biological girl being allowed in the

bathroom and locker room without accommodations being made. “The girl was admitted to the boys locker room for the first time, and walked in, catching boys (literally) with their pants down, causing them embarrassment and concern by the fact that they had been observed changing by an obvious girl,” the letter says. Boys came out of the locker room to express their concern but were told by Oppedisano and Christensen that nothing could be done. Administrators “had placed a gag order on them, and told them that they could not answer the boys on these questions,” the letter says. Administrators further demanded that Oppedisano walk into the locker room and supervise the students, “despite a girl potentially being nude or undressed in that area.” “The administrators told him that the girl in question had ‘every right to use the locker room,’ including the right to disrobe in the open locker area, and shower in its open showers, where Robert is required to periodically walk in and supervise,” the letter says. “Robert will not knowingly place himself in a position to observe a minor female in the nude or otherwise in a state of undress.” Oppedisano, the letter says, has been told by administrators “he will be transferred to another school as discipline for ‘not doing your job in the locker room.’” The school’s policy was adopted without board approval, the letter says. “No law requires this course of events,” the letter says. “Objective biological sex – male and female – is (and should remain) the determining factor for access to gender-appropriate public school facilities and programs, not subjective mental ‘identity’ claims or beliefs that one is the opposite sex, or a feeling that one is not one’s actual biological sex. The District is violating male students’ and teachers’ rights at Chasco Middle School.”

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS BRAZIL'S NEW PRESIDENT VOWS TO MOVE BRAZILIAN EMBASSY IN ISRAEL TO JERUSALEM

CH--Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil’s far-right president elect, recently disclosed plans to move Brazil’s embassy to Jerusalem. “As previously stated during our campaign, we intend to transfer the Brazilian Embassy from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem,” Bolsonaro stated in a Facebook post on Thursday. “Israel is a sovereign state and we shall duly respect that.” In an interview with Israel Hayom, Bolsonaro said, “When I was asked during the campaign if I’ll do it [relocate the embassy] when I was president, I said yes, and that you’re the ones who decide on the capital of Israel, not other people.”

DESPITE VIOLENCE BY ISLAMIC TERROR GROUP, THOUSANDS IN NIGERIA ARE TURNING TO CHRIST

CH--Despite an Islamic terrorist group’s violence, thousands in Nigeria are becoming Christians, a missions group said. Todd Nettleton, of Voice of the Martyrs, said Islamists in the Fulani tribe raided a village in the city of Jos in late September. Twenty people were killed in their homes. The Fulani are not all Islamists, he added, but there are radicals in the tribe. Emeka Umeagbalasi, board chairman of the International Society for Civil Liberties and the Rule of Law, said Christians have been shot to death, but homes and churches have also been destroyed. Still, according to The Christian Post, “thousands” of Fulani are committing their lives to Jesus. “Thousands of Fulani are following Jesus Christ. So this traditionally Muslim tribal group, ethnic group, thousands of them have left Islam behind and are now following Jesus Christ” Nettleton said.

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PRO-LIFE AUSTRALIAN SENATOR MOCKINGLY ANNOUNCES GENDER CHANGE SO HE CAN SPEAK OUT ON ABORTION

CNA--A male Australian senator mockingly proclaimed himself to be a woman before parliament last week so that he, as a pro-life male, could speak against abortion. Barry O'Sullivan made the announcement after being criticized for his faith and told he could not understand abortion because it is a women's issue. "I'm going to declare

my gender today, as I can, to be a woman, and then you'll no longer be able to attack me. These people come and attack me for my religion ...using words like 'rosary beads,' because I had the audacity to raise issues around late-term abortions, where babies who are only minutes away from getting a smack on the bottom and a name, are being aborted under the policies of the Australian Greens. So I will not stand silent, I will not stand mute while these people try to continue to marginalize policies and ideas that we want to continue to discuss for this nation," O'Sullivan added.



Covering Context

By Doug Newell IV of
Clendenin, West Virginia

"Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you" (I Cor. 11:2).

We may not like what Paul says in First Corinthians, but it is very clear what it is Paul said. Paul is telling the women of the church in Corinth that they need to be covered. Some commentators suggest Paul was addressing a cultural issue specific to Corinth. To make this case, you must provide a cultural context where the head covering was the normal, secular custom for the City of Corinth and then a reading of I Corinthians 11 which frames the head covering as part of the liberty discussion Paul starts in chapter eight. Does the covering then deal with how to live in the culture, thus a liberty issue, or is this a church issue? I hope to prove that both the historical context and the context of the epistle proves the head covering



is part of orderly church worship and not a cultural issue of Paul's day. I will first deal with the context of the epistle, then conclude the historical context.

In the eighth chapter we find instruction on Christian liberty, and whether or not it is proper to eat and drink food offered to pagan idols. In chapter nine, Paul defends his apostolic authority and shows his willingness to deny himself of his rights to be supported in the ministry for the good of others. In the tenth chapter we find Old Testament examples about Israel concerning sin and temptation, applying this to the church. Paul details how the one body, the church, cannot partake of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils.

I contend I Corinthians 10:33-11:1 is Paul's concluding remarks after a long section on Christian liberty. An idol is nothing, but we are not idolaters. We have

liberty, but there are bounds to our liberty. All is lawful, not all expedient, and all we do should be for the glory of God. We have freedom in Christ, and no man is our master, but whether it was Jew or Gentile or in the church or out, try to live without offense. I Corinthians 10:33-11:1, **"Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."** Verse 1 of chapter 11 is tied to chapter 10. However, it is equally clear verse two begins a new thought and as I will show, the actual context puts the head covering on the church side of the issue, not the liberty side. Chapter 11 deals with the head covering and the Lord's Supper. Once we leave the subjects of chapter 11, we go on to teaching on spiritual gifts and other church worship issues.

Paul's liberty message is beautiful. Corinthians, you have liberty, but, like me, you can deny your rights to show love to others by either teaching them truth or preaching the gospel. However, remember Israel, how they sinned against God. Your liberty does not give you license to sin. Flee from idolatry. Chapter 10 concludes with instruction to do all things for the glory of God. A fitting capstone to this difficult doctrine. First, he deals with a legalistic view of the Mosaic law, then he shows us liberty is not selfishness, but we use our freedom to love others. Next he deals with the opposite extreme, because having freedom to eat meat does not give you freedom to commit idolatry. He corrects errors on both sides, then exhorts us to walk down the middle of this road, and avoid both ditches, by doing all things for the glory of

God, follow Paul's example as he followed Christ. I think we are all on board so far.

"Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you" (I Cor. 11:2). The word **"now"** in the book is either untranslated, used to continue a thought (1:12), or used to start a new discussion (7:1; 8:1), so it depends on the context. After telling the church to follow him, he praises them for remembering him in all things and to keep the ordinances as he delivered them when he organized the church. He concludes one subject by saying **"follow me"** and transitions to the next topic by saying they were doing well by remembering previous instruction. Chapter 8 began a new discussion on liberty, **"Now as touching things offered unto idols..."** Clearly new territory there. In 11:2, Paul praises the church for remembering his prior teaching, which are the ordinances that he had already delivered, which was old familiar ground.

Paul uses a technique in I Corinthians called an inclusio, which is a literary device where a passage begins and ends with either the same thought or even the same phrasing. Think of them like bookends. You have a bookend on the left, holding the books up on the shelf, and another matching one on the other end, doing the same. Or, think of an inclusio like brackets holding a section of thought together. A clear example is in chapter 11.

"Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. Now in this that I declare unto you

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I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread" (I Cor. 11:2, 17, 22-23).

11:2, "I praise you"

11:17, "I praise you not"

11:2, "keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you"

11:23, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you"

This is important because the inclusio shows a new section of thought, not a continuation of Christian liberty. Paul begins a new section in verse 2 with keeping ordinances and ends chapter 11 with keeping the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. First Corinthians is a church epistle, and these ordinances are church ordinances. He begins verse 2, not with liberty issues, but praising the church for keeping some of the ordinances he had commanded them when he organized the church, and to remember and keep what he instructed in the ordinances. Then halfway through the chapter, he uses the same language to correct them. It is good you remember what I told you before, but I can not praise you for remembering what I said about the Lord's Supper.

But, is Paul not talking about a man made tradition? The Greek word translated "ordinance" is also translated "tradition" in other

places, so is it not wrong to claim the covering is commanded, like the Lord's Supper? Depending on the context, it could be a bad, man made tradition, or an oral teaching. So it depends on what the teaching or ordinance is whether it is good or bad, and it depends on who said it. Notice how Paul viewed his "tradition" in II Thessalonians 3:6, "**Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.**" Paul did not view his "traditions" as optional, they were to be taught, defended, obeyed, and held on to (II Thess. 2:15). We might not have a very high opinion of Paul's "tradition," but Paul certainly believed they were to be obeyed, and expected the churches to obey his divinely inspired imperatives. Paul is not suggesting or offering his opinion when he talks of his "traditions" or "ordinances" because Paul received his teaching from the Lord Himself. Therefore, Paul's ordinances or traditions carry the weight of both apostolic authority and divine inspiration. Since Paul started preaching, men have attempted to discredit what he taught as non-binding, which is why he spends so much time in the New Testament defending his apostleship. We must hold to Paul's apostolic authority.

Both issues in chapter 11 deal with the glory of God and order in the church, which fits the overarching theme of I Corinthians. Glory, order, judgment, and knowledge are major themes you will find weaving in and out the epistle. Paul either addresses these issues positively or negatively. For example, Paul writes about unity

or he will address division from the negative side. There were divisions over the preachers in the church (1:10-11), divisions over spiritual matters in the church (3:1-4), divisions over spiritual gifts in the church (12:25). Divisions over their freedom in the church, and out (8-10). Divisions at the Lord's Supper in the church (11:17-21). He addresses order, or disorder. They were out of order in sexual relations and church discipline (5:1-5). They were out of order in how they dealt with problems with other church members (6:1-8). They were out of order in the whole church service, I Corinthians 14:40, "**Let all things be done decently and in order.**" Paul needed to come back to put things back in order. I Corinthians 11:34, "**... And the rest will I set in order when I come.**" He even set in order how and when they were to give their offerings in the church (16:1-4). They also had a glory problem (5:2, 6; 3:21; 4:18-19), in that their glory was out of order. The church is to judge Scripturally (2:15), judge themselves (5:12; 6:2; 11:31), judge each other (6:2), judge right from wrong (chapters 8-10), judge good from better. The church is also to cling to the wisdom of God, revealed in His Word, through His apostles, in the power of the Spirit (chapters 1-3). The Bible is a spiritual book and must be understood spiritually (2:15-16). This is opposed to the folly of the world, that "**puffeth up**" (8:1-2). The context of the whole book is Paul, with apostolic authority, puts the church back in the right order, for the glory of God.

Another objection claims that because I Corinthians 11 is the only place in Scripture teaching the head covering, so you can

not build a doctrine when there is only one verse, or in this case one section of verses. Ok, is Scripture God breathed? Give me two verses. Is it valid for a man to dress like a woman? Give me two verses saying otherwise, or one New Testament verse. This is the potential danger of Biblical Theology. I know saying you have a problem with Biblical Theology sounds bad -- but Biblical Theology is a system of theology, taking doctrinal development chronologically, as it was given, rather than as a whole, like Systematic Theology does. Biblical Theology can lead one to overemphasize the history of the passage over the interpretation and meaning of the passage. Certainly, it can be helpful, but it does have dangers. We have the closed Book. We can know what God has said on every topic God revealed in His Word (Deut. 29:29). To know the truth about the head covering, we do not need to see how it developed over time, or even see how the Corinthians would have received this teaching, to know what God has said. Obviously, it is important to know who is speaking, and who he is speaking to, but if you go too far, you ignore what Paul actually said by trying to get in the head of the Corinthians. The Bible gives us everything we need to know to rightly interpret and understand the Bible. Sequential exposition has a blind spot when not backed up by sound systematic theology. Herman Bavinck, in *Reformed Dogmatics*, Volume one rightly states, "...according to Scripture itself, dogmatics have the right to rationally absorb its content and, guided by Scripture, to rationally process it and also to acknowledge as truth that which

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can be deduced from it by lawful inference."

But even within this short passage, Paul connects the head covering to other Biblical truths and principles - headship, the created order, and the glory unto God, creation, the angels, then nature itself. Moved by the Holy Spirit, Paul instructs the church in an ordinance practiced by the other churches (11:16) and previously taught in Corinth (11:2) and based upon the foundation of Scriptural inferences. This is not the same thing as saying the head covering is only taught in one place. For example, I Corinthians 15:29 talks about "Baptism for the dead," and is a very difficult passage. However, the Scriptures elsewhere shed light on what baptism for the dead cannot mean. We know what baptism is, and what it is for, and who it is for from other passages of Scripture. We know what it cannot mean, even if we are not sure what it actually does mean. The principle is, you cannot build a doctrine on one verse, without supporting verses. If you take I Corinthians 15:29 on an island, then yes, you would be foolish to build a doctrine on one verse. But given the analogy of the faith, and harmony and perfection of the Scripture, you know it cannot mean Christians are to baptize dead people. However, the inverse is true. For example, II Timothy 3:16, says the Word of God is inspired, and is the only place the word inspiration is used in the Bible. Liberals deny God's inspiration by pointing here and saying, "that is the only place in the Bible where it says the Bible is inspired, you can not build a

doctrine of inspiration on one verse!" However, you can see the inferences and supporting passages buttressing the doctrine of inspiration. Just because something is only explicitly found in one place, does not mean it is not true and does not mean it is not inferred in other passages. A similar tactic is used by people pushing for ordaining women and advocates of the "gay Christian" theory. Paul supports his teaching on the head covering on Biblical principles and foundation of creation and headship. The head covering does not contradict the analogy of Scripture but supports and is in perfect harmony with the whole of the Bible's teaching on headship, order, creation, and the roles of men and women. Which is somewhat ironic, considering my next point.

Was the head covering a Jewish tradition or a cultural phenomenon of the ancient times? If we say the head covering is cultural, where do we get this information? That interpretation of the text is built on a presupposition, and if that foundation cracks, the whole interpretation falls down. But you will have a hard time proving this assertion from the Bible. The cultural covering interpretation tells us it was the custom for women wear coverings all the time, and it would be an offence to be seen without one in public. His proof the covering was a liberty issue is based on the presupposition that every woman in town wore one, it was scandalous for a woman not to wear a veil, and for the furtherance of the gospel, women had to wear the covering outside the church so they could share the gospel. It sounds very good. It may bring to mind modern

day reporters going to Muslim countries, wearing a burkas as not to offend the culture. Here is the kicker. We have 15 verses on the head covering, that we can not build a doctrine around because there is no other epistle that talks about the covering, but we have ZERO verses on the fashion tastes of Corinthian women that we are supposed to interpret these verse through? Corinthian women had to wear veils all the time in public? Uh, says who? Whose "tradition" are we supposed to listen to? Looks like we have an authority issue.

God's Word does not show us that women wore veils all the time in Gentile nations. This is also not corroborated in history. The common fashion of the day was either sleeveless (or down to the elbow) tunics called the *peplos* with hats only for fashion purposes. They also wore "elaborate coiffures and [held] their hair in nets." *Bible Manners and Customs*, Vos. You can take 5 minutes and Google ancient Grecian or Roman fashion and you know the veil was not a custom of Corinth. It is just not true that Paul entered a modest city and he instructed women to keep up the secular practice of wearing veils as not to hinder door to door visitation. Yes, look at the Middle East now, and you will see women covered from head to toe. The burka and covering you see today is not Greek or Roman influence, but rather Islamic influence, which was still several centuries down the road. Our culture in the United States, indeed all of Western Civilization, is downstream from Ancient Greece and Rome. We have more in common with Corinth culturally than we do the modern day Islamic states. The Jews were Hellenistic Jews,

which means they were Hebrews, but lived in Greek culture, spoke Greek, and dressed as Grecian people. Corinth was established by the Greeks, over 700 years before Paul ever came around. Plus, Corinth was conquered and destroyed, and rebuilt by the Romans nearly a century before this epistle. With Corinth's long and storied history, it would not be hard to find any number of cultural movements in the course of a millennia, dominated by two of the greatest world empires.

Let us imagine, in the year 4017, some scholar was going to write a paper on the spiritual condition of New York City as relating to the dress of the day. Without knowing the exact date, he reads some papers on the fashion and times of New York, from 1750 and applies their dress to his thesis about the culture of New York City in 2018. From the distance of 2,000 years, a hundred years or so does not seem like a lot of time, he is in the ballpark. But the city moved from the hands of British control to independence in the new United States, not to mention the cultural shift of the era matters and a lot can change in a decade or two.

With Corinth, there is a whole lot of history and the data in the commentaries that may be true, but what era of Corinth are they describing, and how do we know that is the context Paul is preaching? Some scholars point out much of the historical information used to talk about women shaving their heads in temple prostitution was from an earlier era in Corinth and had long since come to an end by the time Paul arrives (the temple of Aphrodite, where this was practiced, was destroyed two hundred and some years

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prior). Plus, we do know from God's Word, women wore their hair in elaborate, and beautiful hairstyles (I Tim. 2:9; I Peter 3:3) not covered up all the time. The idea the Greek and Roman culture was a tad too heavy on the patriarchy, so Paul wanted the women to wear their head coverings is foreign to the Bible (I Cor. 14:34; I Tim. 2:11; I Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:20). The consistent teaching of the New Testament churches was for women to dial back the immodesty of the culture, and for women to cover their hair, rather than make a show of it, like the world. According to God's Word, women are counter-cultural, and cover their glory, not to be proud and flaunt it like the world. Wearing the head covering to avoid offending the Greek women of Corinth is the opposite of reality. If this is true, then how far do we apply this principle of dressing like the culture? The cover for the culture theory means Paul meant something other than what he actually said. So my question stands, "Says who?" I will need a lot more proof than commentators to deny Paul's apostolic authority on the matter.

But, whether of Greek or Roman influence, can we really say Corinth was a modest culture? I am sorry, but it is really hard to fathom the city of Corinth, from reading the text, was so bashful and modest a woman could not walk downtown without her head covered, especially in light of the sexual sins addressed in this one letter. Have you ever seen a Greek goddess statue? Read the Odyssey? The Isthmian games were held in Corinth and hardly a modest affair. I

am all for reading history to get as much of a feeling of the culture as possible, but you wrest the Scriptures by putting the epistles in a false setting. Corinth was such a place of women's subjection that men bowed down and worshipped goddesses? How can we, in 2018, know more about the culture than the men who actually lived it? Men such as Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD), Tertullian (160-220 AD), Hippolytus (170-236 AD), Ambrosiaster (366-384 AD), Jerome (347-420 AD), Chrysostom (349-407 AD) *Headcovering Throughout Christian History*, Phillips, all believed and wrote that women need to wear the covering in public worship. You provide a different interpretation of the text by putting Corinth in a culture, assuming it looked like modern day Afghanistan. It is more likely, if a woman happened upon a church service coming home from the market, she might enter and say, "what is the deal with all the veils?"

History from outside sources is not inspired. We have to be very careful with commentators who want to correct the clear meaning of the words of Scripture by showing us a new context or a fresh way of seeing things from sources outside the Bible. I Timothy 1:4, **"Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do."** "Says who?" If you are going to take off your veil, you need to ask by whose authority. If you will not put on the veil, you need to give a justification of why Paul did not mean what he said, and is that authority sufficient to stand at the day of the Lord? To say the covering was a cultural

issue, you need Scripture plus something else. Prior to writing this article, I read the book of First Corinthians, straight through, front to back, several times. I did this to honestly assess whether or not I had missed the "cultural issue" context. I read honestly looking for any sign of information relating the cultural dress of the day and did not find even the slightest illusion. You cannot, from the Bible, make the case that head coverings were the cultural norm of Corinth. You will find historical evidence to the contrary. Taking the word of fallible men, where there is NOT consensus, to rewrite the Apostle Paul is unwise and dangerous.

If the head covering was cultural, Paul would have contradicted himself to explain the principles of Christian liberty and then immediately tell the women at Corinth they must subject themselves to traditions of men. Would Paul subject Gentile women to Pharisaic tradition? Not likely. He did not say they should for the brethren's sake? Paul said with Christian liberty, we are FREE to eat meats offered to idols, but immediately says you are not free to ditch the covering? Paul would have been teaching, "You are not free to take off your head covering, because of all these scriptural reasons about angels, God's glory, the Trinity, your husband and creation, because you might offend the unbelieving Gentiles?" If the head covering is a "liberty" issue, Paul would have dealt with it in the same way he dealt with it with idols and meats. He would have shown why a woman does not have to wear a covering, but then explained why she should.

When Paul dealt with meats offered to idols, he does not give any Scriptural reasons why a

person should abstain from meats from Old Testament principles. The only reason to abstain is if it bothers your conscience or offends a brother, because we are free in Christ. If it comes down to offending a lost person or offending a saved person, you should offend the lost person. If the head covering were a "liberty" issue, Paul would not have labored to give the Biblical reasons for wearing it, connecting it to the glory of God. Liberty in Christ is a blessing of the New Covenant, not the Old. When Paul told the church they could not commit adultery and idolatry by giving Old Testament examples, but he said you are free to eat meat because an idol is nothing. The Jews would have had all sorts of Old Testament principles to prove why Christians should abstain from meats offered to idols. They had a whole list, I am sure. If the head covering is a liberty issue, Paul would be doing the same thing the Jews did with meats offered to idols, by drawing from the glory of God and creation that does not explicitly say anything about the covering, to command women to wear a veil. But since this is Holy Spirit inspired, we know Paul is rightly applying Scriptural principles. Beside Paul's explicit instruction (which ought to be enough), he also gives at least 8 reasons why a woman ought to wear a head-covering and gives zero reasons why she should not. Following the way Paul argues, there is no way this was a liberty issue.

Plus, Paul does not mention liberty. Paul does not mention lost people, or others being offended. In fact, the only people offended in chapter 11 is God the Father, the Lord Jesus, the angels, and her husband, if she is uncovered.

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If this is a liberty issue, who is the weak Christian in that scenario, or who is the woman trying to win? If she was not allowed to go outside without a covering, is she really going to be able to go house to house and witness effectively? Who are they trying to win, by wearing the covering? The central theme of chapter 11 is the glory of God. It has nothing to do with the world at large. If the head covering were a liberty issue, Paul would have shown, as he did with the meats -- the covering is nothing and women had the freedom to leave it behind. If the head covering were a liberty issue, Paul would have shown how this freedom is good and used for the glory of God. As Paul tied the head covering to headship, freedom from the covering is freedom from submission. It is freedom from headship. It is freedom from the God ordained role of men and women, and that, is not freedom.

R.C. Sproul well said, "The basic problem here is that our reconstructed knowledge of first-century Corinth has led us to supply Paul with a rationale that is foreign to the one [Paul] gives himself. In a word, we are not only putting words into the apostle's mouth, but we are ignoring words that are there. If Paul merely told women in Corinth to cover their heads and gave no rationale for such instruction, we would be strongly inclined to supply it via our cultural knowledge. In this case, however, Paul provides a rationale which is based on an appeal to creation, not to the custom of Corinthian harlots. We must be careful not to let our zeal for knowledge of the culture obscure what is actually said. To

subordinate Paul's stated reason to our speculatively conceived reason is to slander the apostle and turn exegesis into eisogesis."

The Lord's church is the last bastion of Biblical modesty, and God glorifying headship. It is gone in the culture, the workplace, even the home, so any act of Biblical submission or headship is foreign to unbelievers and even many believers. I am afraid the commentators making the covering a cultural issue were looking for a plausible reason why they would not have to tell the women in their church they needed a covering. They made a way to be faithful to what the text says without having to be faithful to what the text means. When visitors come to the house of God and see women with covered heads, they may find the veil strange. I have many times answered the question, "what is the deal with all the veils?" Is the answer then, to take off the veil, so the unbeliever, coming in the church, feels warm and welcome? How far do you take that principle? Are you going to choose your Bible translation based on the preference of unbelievers? Or is the answer to wear the veil for the purpose Paul gave, and model the glory of God in humble obedience? Believers come in the house of God to worship the Lord of hosts. If an unbeliever comes, great! But the service is for God and God's people. Everything about the worship service should make an unbeliever a bit uncomfortable, if holy people, read a holy book and worship a holy God. It is also a mistake to assume that the further back in history you go, the more modest you will find men and women.



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A Memorable Day

By James Smith
(1802 - 1862)

What Christian, in looking back, cannot call to mind some memorable days in his history? I can recall many. I consider the day of my natural birth a memorable day; but of that, of course, I know nothing--but from others. But there is another day, and another birth, of which I have been thinking, more memorable to me by far. What a mercy it is to be "born of God," "born of the Spirit," "born from above!" and it is very blessed, when we can look back, and remember how the Lord met with us, renewed us in the Spirit of our minds, and saved us by His grace.

In my case, grace, and grace alone can be seen. Never was one more unlikely to be saved than me. Never did I appear farther from God, than on the day the Lord came near to me to judgment. O my soul, as I call to mind God's mercy, I charge you to praise the Lord! And it was distinguishing grace, too, for one was taken and the other left; and it was the worst, and the most unlikely, that was taken. By the grace of God alone, I am what I am! As grace did the work, effected the change, and made me a new creature in Christ Jesus--let grace have all the glory.

At Old Brentford, Middlesex, on the 28th day of February, 1819, in a large room fitted up as a place of worship, might have been, seen two lads, sitting together on the

Lord's day morning; an aged man occupied the little desk, to preach the Word of God. A peculiarity of manner tickled the fancy of the lads, and instead of listening to the Word, with a view to profit by it, they were employed in ridiculing and making sport of this aged servant of Christ. They went from the little sanctuary without remorse, hardened in sin and afar from God.

In the evening of that day, the same lads were in the same place--but the desk was occupied by another, and a younger man. He was evidently from the country--a plain, unlettered man. His manner was solemn, his voice unmusical--but his message was Divine. After reading the Word, he prayed devoutly, and when the second hymn was sung, he arose and gave out for his text, Mark 8:36-37, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Solemnly did he speak of the value of the soul, of its danger, and the importance of seeking its salvation. The attention of the writer was arrested, the arrow of conviction pierced his conscience, and penetrated his soul. He sighed deeply--but unconsciously. He went home sorely depressed in mind. He went to bed, hoping to fall asleep and forget all; but sleep fled away, and sad and distressing thoughts were his companions. He was filled with tossings to and fro, until the dawning of the day. When exhausted nature fell asleep, the mind found no rest, and in the morning he arose unrefreshed.

That was a gloomy morning, and a distressing day, for the arrows of the Almighty were within me, and the poison thereof was drinking up my spirits. I tried to pray--but could not. I sunk in deep waters where

♦ (Continued on page 23)

Gleanings

(Continued from page 22) ♦

there was no standing. Conviction was attended with temptation, and temptation almost drove me to despair. No human hand could extract that barbed arrow. No works of the creature could satisfy the enlightened conscience. Ignorant of the way of salvation, by simple faith in Jesus, the soul was groping in the dark, like the blind for the wall, until at last it came to the conclusion, "There is no hope!"

But as in nature, when the darkness is greatest, the light is nearest, so it was in this case; for when all hope that I should be saved was taken away, then Jesus was revealed, faith was wrought in the heart by the Spirit, and salvation by free grace was received and enjoyed. Faith in the atonement removed guilt from the conscience; and the application of the Word chased away darkness from the mind. Instead of bitterness, there was now peace; instead of gloom, there was sweet joy; instead of despondency, there was confidence in God. The trumpet of the jubilee was now sounded, the year of release was come. The debtor was freed from his obligations, the prisoner from his chains, and the bondsman from his thralldom. The feast of fat things was made, the table was spread, the head was anointed with oil, and the cup ran over. The darkness was past, and the true light now shined. The tempter fled, and the soul escaped like a bird out of the hand of the fowler.

Oh, how precious was the Savior now! There was music in His name, salvation in His blood, and true freedom in His service. Oh, how sweet was grace now! It was grace that arrested the criminal, and grace that brought the pardon. It was grace that wounded, and

grace that healed. All was grace-free, sovereign, distinguishing grace. Never was creature further from God, or sinner less likely to be converted, than I was on that day, when the Word came home with power. Never was soul in a more helpless or hopeless condition than I was, when the Lord passed by me, and in His love bade me, Live. At His word, death and darkness fled from me. At His bidding, I stood up a new creature. Truly, I was His workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had before appointed, that I should walk in them.

And now, forty years have passed away, since that memorable day. Many have been the changes I have passed through, and many the trials I have endured. Satan has thrust sore at me that I might fall, the world has done its worst to lead me astray--but having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day. The life imparted so long ago was immortal. The change effected was permanent. The transformation was divine. The Lord who called me--has kept me. The grace that renewed me--has employed me. And being kept by the power of God, and used in the service of God, I wish to give all the glory of all that has been wrought in me, or done by me--to the grace of God alone.

The Lord sought me--when I did not seek Him. The Lord converted me--when I was mocking and insulting Him. If ever a sinner was unlikely to be saved--I was that sinner. If ever creature was unlikely to be employed in the service of God--I was that creature. If, therefore, others can ascribe their change to free will, I cannot; I must ascribe mine to free grace! If any other man can take credit to himself, for anything that is good, I cannot, for I never had a good thought, or felt a good desire, or

did a good deed--but as the effect of God working in me, to will and to do of His own good pleasure. Glory be to God the Father, for choosing me to eternal life in His beloved Son. Glory be to God the Son, for redeeming me by His most precious blood. Glory be to God the Holy Spirit, for quickening me by His divine power, and translating me out of darkness into His marvelous light. Glory, glory be to God, Father, Son, and Spirit, as the author of my salvation, the source of all good, and the giver of every gift and grace!

And now, my soul, I charge you--never let this day pass by without raising an Ebenezer to your God; nor let any day pass without some effort to bring glory to His holy name, for His most free, powerful, and sovereign grace!

Oh, what evils have been prevented, what blessings have been effected, in my experience, by God's free grace! All that I am, all that I have, Lord--is given to me by your free grace. From You I have received all--and to You, and Your service, I devote all. Before this--oh, awful thought!--before this--but for grace, I had most probably been in Hell! Before this, I had degraded my nature to the lowest, and disgraced my name beyond recovery--but for the grace of God. How can I do otherwise than speak of grace, write of grace, and glory in grace--who am laid under such obligations to grace? It is astonishing that I do not prize it more, praise it more, preach it more, and glory in it more, than I do. But in Heaven, in eternity, when I review all the Lord's dealings with me, and all the way the Lord has led me--I shall no doubt look back to the little sanctuary where He met with me, and the hallowed day when He called me, and with

♦ (Continued on page 24)

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

10-1-2018 to 10-31-2018

Beginning Balance	\$239.48
RECEIPTS:	
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	75.00
B. J. Cook, Selfner, FL	90.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	200.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	300.00
Carol Willett, Edgewater, FL	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	200.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testamnet B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	30.00
Anonymous	2,610.00
Dividing checks	300.00
Sub Total	\$5,172.50
TOTAL	\$5,411.98

EXPENDITURES:

Printing	490.00
Postage	510.61
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.90
Supplies	0.00
Dividing checks	300.00
Bank Charge	13.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,789.51
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,622.47



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

10-1-2018 to 10-31-2018

Beginning Balance	\$1,338.24
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek, Williamsburg, KY	200.00
Calvary I. B. C., Sumas, WA	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	200.00
TOTAL	725.00
TOTAL	2,063.24
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	403.98
Bank charge	10.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	413.98
Interest	+0.01
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,649.27

Gleanings

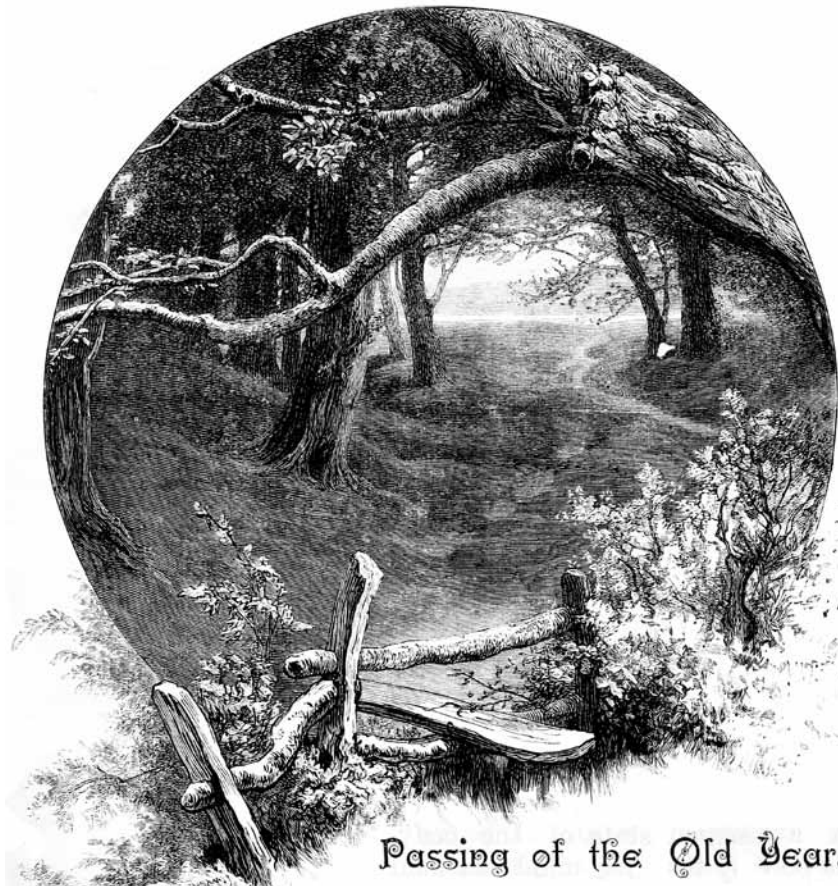
(Continued from page 23) ♦

thrilling pleasure and holy joy--praise, bless, and adore His holy name, for His rich and sovereign grace!

Reader, do you know anything of a change of heart--which always produces a change of life? Have you been arrested, convicted, condemned—and then pardoned, and set to work for God, of His free grace? Can you say, **“I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears”** (Ps. 34:4)! You must be born again--or perish. You must seek the Lord--or die in your sins.

Not everyone is drawn suddenly as I was; many are drawn gradually to the Savior. How we are brought to Christ is of little importance; the question is, Are we truly brought to Him? All are not sought out by grace in the exact manner as I was; but no one ever sought the Lord but as the effect of grace; nor did anyone ever seek the grace of God in vain. If you seek the Lord, He will be found by you, reveal Himself to you, and save you with an everlasting salvation.

And, never forget this, for it is a thought as full of comfort as of truth, that the very desire to seek the Lord comes from the Lord, and is a proof that He has favor toward you. Never would we seek Him--if He did not first seek us; and His seeking us--is evidenced by our seeking Him. Having loved us with an everlasting love, with His loving-kindness He draws us to Himself; and as He draws--we run; nor can we rest, until we find rest in Jesus. Oh that the Lord would draw millions more, as He has drawn us, to the praise of the glory of His grace!



Passing of the Old Year.

*Farewell, old year, sadly we wait
Till thou hast breathed thy last,
And lingeringly we close the gate
Upon the happy past.*

*In memory thou wilt seem to some
The sweetest they have known;
Midst years long past, or years to come,
Thou wilt stand out alone.*

*Others, alas! would bury thee
In deep oblivious shade,*

*And would forget, if that might be,
The wounds that thou hast made.*

*Thy end is near; the tolling bell
Signals thy swift demise,
While from our hearts the solemn knell
Is echoed forth in sighs--*

*Sighs that we blurred the page so soon,
That opened out so fair,
By jarring strings put out of tune
The music of the year.*

M. E. Metherell

“Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness”
(Psalms 65:11).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Philadelphia Baptist Church of Decatur, Alabama is seeking the Lord's guidance in calling His eternally appointed man to fill the vacancy left when He called His faithful servant Elder Wm. Doyal Thomas unto his everlasting home September 29, 2018.

If any brother of like faith and order would like to be considered for that pastorate or would like information on the church please call or text Brother Mike Gibson at 256 303-7747 or email Brother James Reynolds at admin@pbcofdecaturalabama.org. or text (ONLY) 931 452-1158.

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

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

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

The Faith Missionary Baptist Church of Cobbitty, South Wales, Australia is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact David Jackson at 4 Station Street, Thirlmere, NSW 2572, Australia or Email: shellie45@bigpond.com.au.

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