

Bed Too Short, Blanket Too Narrow

By George A. Lofton
(1839 – 1915)

My picture drawn from this sketch is an illustration of Isaiah 28:20: **"For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it."** The caricature shows the wretched and sleepless condition of one upon a cold night under such a situation of unrest. The real theme of the text is an *Insufficient Religion*---that is to say, a religion which has an insufficient foundation upon which to lie, and an insufficient character with which to cover the soul. Self-sufficiency and self-righteousness, principles and practices which are fundamentally and resultantly inefficient and vicious, constitute such a religion. The occasion of the text, however, involved the literal condition of the Jews, in the mind of the prophet, when they should be shut up in Jerusalem by the siege of the Assyrians, and possibly pointing to the final investment of the Romans, when Jerusalem should be closed in and destroyed.

The concrete idea of Isaiah, therefore, was that the Jews thus enclosed in their city would be placed in the most straitened circumstances; and with no God to help them, depending upon their leagues with other nations and looking to false gods for help, they would have no foundation for hope and no covering

against their fate. Jerusalem, with her walls and her bulwarks, would be like a bed too short to lie on, an insufficient defense in itself; and with no God to cover them with His righteousness and protection, they would be without wisdom and strength, like a man on a cold night with his blanket too narrow. In such a situation there would be neither rest nor comfort, neither help nor hope; and any man who has spent a winter's night at a second-class hotel or a third-rate boarding-house, where you are treated "just like home-folks," can have some appreciation of such a condition.

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A Red Horse of War

By Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 – 2002)

"And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword" (Rev. 6:3-4).

In the last lesson I showed how that the white horse rider is a symbol of the rise and reign of the Antichrist and the False Prophet. The second

Recognizing Satan's Handiwork

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us" (I Thess. 2:18).

I want us to think about the powers and the deeds of Satan. I know that I often times encourage you to consider the great God that we serve, and His awesome powers and His handiwork. But I want you to think for a little while about our adversary, the devil. **"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"** (I Pet.



5:8).

I think that it would do us some good to acknowledge, or admit, that Satan is powerful, that he is dangerous, and that he is adamantly opposed to you and me – at least as long as we are seeking to serve the Lord. Now, I know that the Lord God is in control. And I know that ultimately His will is going to be accomplished. I also know that it is good to realize that whatever evil comes upon us, we know that the Lord has permitted that evil to come upon us. However, who is it that perpetrates the evil against us? And who is it that attacks us, tempts us, and takes advantage of our every weakness? I believe that we fail to give Satan the credit for much that is truly his handiwork. I know that he is not omnipresent – but I also know that he has many followers, servants, and even many fallen angels at his disposal. So, whenever the Lord will permit him to work his evil ways, we can be sure that Satan is eagerly and successfully plying his evil trade.

I want us to think a little more in depth; and I want you to recognize Satan's handiwork in the evil that comes upon you and upon me and upon all of those that seek to serve the Lord.

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horse rides forth at the command of the second beast as the Lamb opens the second seal. The red horse symbolizes further developments in

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It is a great blessing to know your blessings.

We are apt to be like swine under an oak, eating the acorns, but never praising the tree; better to be like the little chick, which, when it drinks, lifts its head toward Heaven.

"O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever" (Psalms 107:1).

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

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Bed Too Short,

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The spiritual application of the picture before us---the figure of an insufficient religion---affords an interesting study. What is such a religion? It is any religion which has no foundation to build upon, no character to clothe itself with for eternity. The only religion which ever offered a sufficient basis and a sufficient covering is Christianity. Christ is the only Rock of our salvation; and He alone can be just to sin and yet justify the ungodly. He alone can pay sin's debt and impute righteousness, save the soul from death, and cover moral guilt. He died for our transgression, and He was raised for our justification; and when the Christian appears at the judgment he will stand upon the Rock of Ages for salvation, and will be clothed in the righteous robe of Christ's merit, the only **"wedding garment"** in which we can appear at the "great supper of the Lamb." We are saved by grace, justified by faith; and our entrance into life and glory will be based solely upon and characterized by the record and dignity of Christ, our great and eternal Substitute. The Christian's own character and righteousness are the evidence and outcome of salvation by grace, justification by faith here below; and his own character and righteousness will be his joy and reward hereafter; but the grace of God alone can, through Christ, regenerate and justify him, save and sanctify him, crown and glorify him. Christ is our **"all in all,"** our "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," the **"Author and Finisher of our faith,"** and He is the holy bed upon which we lie, the only covering in which we wrap for salvation and sanctification. **"Other foundation,"** says Paul, **"can no man lay;"** and Peter says, "There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved." The atonement which Jesus made for our sins under God's grace is our all-sufficient foundation; and the righteousness of Christ wrought out in His perfect life, and imputed to us by faith, is our all-sufficient covering.

Thus we are redeemed and thus clothed for God and eternity. In Christ

alone, as in no other conceivable way, can we be made alive from the dead, and reckoned "innocent." Quickened by His word, justified by His blood through the operation of His life-giving and blood-cleansing Spirit, we are saved and sanctified; and when we stand at last before God, body and soul, we shall be absolutely perfect through the redemptive scheme, conceived, executed, and applied through the blood, the Word, and the work of Christ. We shall completely escape death, Hell, and the grave; and in the consummation of our resurrection from the dead we shall appear in glory without a stain upon our character, and without a defect in our nature---all through the perfection of Christ. It will take perfection to stand before perfection, both legal and moral. There is no other way, philosophical or religious, to attain this end but by the cross of Calvary. A man must be justified from the guilt of sin, he must be made alive from the dead, both morally and physically, and he must be presented before a perfect God without spot, wrinkle, or blemish, to inherit eternal life. How can this be done except through the crucified, risen, and glorified Redeemer as revealed in the Bible? How plain to the devout and intelligent believer? Who that knows the depth and character of sin cannot see and believe this truth? We must be perfect to live with God; and perfection has no foundation except in the redemptive atonement of Christ and in the covering character of Christ. Nor can such perfection be wrought out in man or applied to his life except through the pardoning and justifying blood and the regenerating and sanctifying Spirit of Christ. Out of Christ, in the very nature of things, God must be a consuming and eternal fire. "Blessed is the man whose sin is covered, and to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity."

But let us now glance, by contrast, at the religions of human reason and superstition. The Jews tried idolatry. They made leagues with surrounding nations and worshiped their gods, seeking help against internal division and foreign oppression. They forgot Jehovah, they abandoned the blood of the typical covenant, and the consequence was that they became a

prey to their own internal dissensions and corruptions and fell under the appalling domination of foreign despotism and superstition. All the gods and armies of Egypt, Assyria, and Moab could do them no good. Straitened and stricken by famine and siege, desolate, distracted, and divided among themselves, without the help and hope of Israel's God, they ever found heathenism and idolatry a bed too short to stretch upon and a covering too narrow to wrap themselves in. They only survived and lived when they cried and returned to God and to the ark of the covenant. When idolatry and heathenism had been cured among the Jews by captivity, they finally fell into Pharisaism and formalism, another bed too short and another blanket too narrow; and in the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, when the nation was shut up and slaughtered within the helpless walls of the golden city, we have a perfect idea of the Prophet in the declaration of this text and in the use of this figure, who beheld a people lying down upon a false and hollow religion, and seeking to cover themselves with their own sufficiency and righteousness.

So with every other nation worshiping the gods of reason or superstition. They have perished or are perishing from the face of the earth. Babylon, Nineveh, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, with all the glory of their empires and their civilization, have passed away upon the foundation and under the cover of an insufficient religion. The only nations which have lived, and prospered, and elevated the earth are those which have recognized and honored Christ and Christianity. All other nations now living are simply dead while they live; and they only quicken and advance with the glory of the age as the blood-stained banner of the cross is unfurled above them. What is true of a nation is first of all true with the individual; and in proportion as the true or false religions prevail is a nation, a State, or a community dead or vital.

Let us look, individually and characteristically, at this subject before we come to a conclusion. Behold the moralist and the

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Hymn Histories and Scriptures



By Nathaniel Hille
of Caldwell, Kansas

Isaac Watts

This month, I want to look at a well known author of a number of hymns—Isaac Watts. In our previous examination of a hymn and its history,



we noted *Joy To The World*—one of Watts' own hymns. We were unable to bring out a great deal of HISTORY on Watts. We now wish to write on the man: Isaac Watts; praying that this will give light to all the hymns written by him.

Isaac Watts has been given the title "the father of the English hymn," to which it appears that he is well deserving. Until Watts, hymns were not sung in English Churches. Only the psalms of the Scriptures set to metrical beats were used. It is said that the tone of the service was entirely dreary and destroyed all ability to worship the Lord joyfully. It all began when a young Isaac complained to his father (the preacher) about the music. His father replied, "Why don't you write a hymn suitable for congregational worship?" That afternoon, Isaac, wrote Hymn #1, *Behold the Glories of the Lamb*, 696 more hymns followed. A few are still well known today: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, *Alas, And Did My Savior Bleed (At The Cross)*, *Joy To The World*, *Jesus Shall Reign Where'er The Sun*, *I Sing Th' Almighty Pow'r of God*, *Come, We That Love The Lord (We're Marching To Zion)*, *O (Our) God, Our Help In Ages Past*, *Am I A Soldier Of The Cross*.

DESTINED FROM BIRTH

Isaac (1674-1748) was born into perilous times. His father, a minister, was arrested one year after having been married. His crime—

"persistently worshipping God according to his conscience." The elder Watts was a "Dissenter"¹ from the Anglican church. Isaac was the eldest of 8 children and his mother was often found nursing Isaac on the jail steps while visiting his father. It seems that Isaac was destined to be a "rebel" from his birth worshipping God according to the dictates of his conscience.

A HIGHLY GIFTED YOUTH

Grant it, Isaac Watts did not have all the distractions that young people have now a days, but nevertheless, children have always been at play. Watts learned Latin by age 4, Greek at 9, French at 11, and Hebrew at 13. Watts learned French on his own so he could converse with the refugees from France in his city. A local physician was so impressed that he offered to finance Isaac's education at Oxford or Cambridge. In order to attend either university, Isaac would have to renounce his "dissenting views." Watts refused and attended a "dissenting academy." While there, he wrote a lot of poetry, most of it in Latin.

MORE THAN A HYMN WRITER

Isaac Watts was also an able theologian. Watts penned a book titled *Ruin and Recovery* of which John Wesley used forty-four pages of in his *The Doctrine of Original Sin*.

Watts also wrote a book of logic and one of reason as he was a Christian philosopher. These books were formerly used in what use to be some of America's finest universities and are still available in print today. Isaac was also a gifted astronomer, which is displayed in many of his hymns as he wrote of the vastness of the created universe and the greatness of his God.

THE WATTS SCHOOL OF HYMNODY

The past four centuries of hymn writing owes much to young Watts. Isaac set the model for the English hymn where others had failed. Our hymnals are full of those who walked in the clear path Isaac cut out with his own pen.

Watts believed that the song service should not be a dreary thing, but full of praise toward our God and Savior. If the song service was to be truly praise worthy, it had to

go beyond the mere words of the Scripture and be that which came forth from the human heart full of love and adoration for the Lord. He believed that if the Psalms were to be used, they must be "renovated" by giving them Christian content. Watts' hymns are comprised of five basic principles:

1. Grand Topics: Watts focused on the awe of God's omnipotence, the spaciousness of nature, the vastness of time and the dreadfulness of eternity.

2. "Calvinistic In Theology"²: Watts' hymns sing of the glory and sovereignty of God, the depravity of the human nature, the all-sufficient atonement of Christ and the security of God's elect.

3. "Christian in Focus": Christ is exalted above all else. He is the center of every hymn of Watts'.

4. Congregational Singing: Watts wrote his hymns with the idea that they were to be sung in a congregational setting, preparing the heart for worshipping God. Watts stated, "The singing of God's praise is the part of worship most closely related to heaven."

5. Based upon Scripture: While Watts got away from psalmody, he did not remove Scripture from his hymns. He faithfully paraphrased Scripture and made masterful allusions unto that which is contained in "**Thus saith the LORD.**"

Although Isaac Watts never married, he loved children and composed what is believed to be the first Children's hymnal: "*Divine Songs For Children*" which included the hymn "*I Sing The 'Mighty Pow'r of God.*" Watts wrote in his 24th Children's hymn:

*Why should I love my sport so well,
So constant at my play,
And lose the thoughts of heaven and hell,
And then forget to pray!*

LEAVING A LASTING IMPRESSION

It is ironic to me that at first Watts' hymns were considered to be blasphemous and outrageous, while today there are many who cry for the "old-time hymns of Watts and others." What we call "traditional" was one day believed to be "radical and satanic." One critic fumed, "Christian congregations have shut out divinely inspired psalms and taken in Watts'

flights of fancy!" Watts' hymns were often referred to as "Watts' Whims" or "hymns of human composure." Watts' hymns outraged many causing pastors to be "fired" and splitting congregations (most notably was a church that John Bunyan had been the pastor of years prior). Some churches did not split but reached a compromise: The psalms would be sung at the early part of the service and the hymns at the close of the service thus allowing the people to leave before the "hymns" were sung or to not sing at all. Watts, in response to his critics penned with subtle barbs what we commonly refer to as *We're Marching to Zion*:

*Come We That Love The Lord,
and let our joys be known;
Join in a song with sweet accord,
and thus surround the throne.
Let those refuse to sing
who never knew our God;
but children of the heavenly King
may speak their joys abroad.*

Yet, Watts pressed on and today we sing *The Mighty Pow'r of God* as Watts had penned and many are none the wiser. Let me close with a quote from Isaac Watts himself concerning his hymns: "My design was not to exalt myself to the rank and glory of poets, but I was ambitious to be a servant to the churches, and a helper to the joy of the meanest Christian." AMEN!

NOTES

1. "dissenter" were those who desired for purity in the church (both in doctrine and practice) and believed this could only be done by completely breaking away from the established church in England. Dissenters were similar to Puritans, save the Puritans sought to "reform" the established church.

2. Calvinistic—I personally do not care for the term "Calvinist." I am not a Calvinist, I am a Baptist. Baptist believed the so-called "5 points of Calvin" long before Calvin existed. Baptists never have believed in burning those who opposed their beliefs on a stake, as John Calvin did. But we use a term as it is widely accepted in our present day to describe a set of Doctrines more commonly known amongst Baptists as the "Doctrines of Grace."



Bed Too Short,

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philosopher, depending respectively upon his self-righteousness or his wisdom for salvation, and see if his bed is not too short and his blanket too narrow. Intellectual self-conceit or moral self-righteousness is the foundation he lays or the roof he puts upon his religious structure. He needs no Jesus, or only wants Him as a convenience, not a necessity. Christ may have been a good man, a perfect teacher, a model exemplar in life and sacrifice; but He is not a Redeemer, a Saviour! He is a great helper, but His blood neither cleanses nor does His Spirit make alive! Christ and Him crucified is a stumbling-block to Jewish self-righteousness, and foolishness to Greek self-wisdom. The heart of man is the bulbous root of the hyacinth, and, at best, if you take Christ at all, the gospel is but the light of a moral sun which warms and develops the beautiful flowers of human excellence and immortality from the bulbous root in which is contained all the virtues and possibilities of eternal life. Many do not need Christ at all, in any sense. They are too good to be damned. They don't need blood to cleanse them. They require no regenerating life from God. They don't steal, nor lie, nor curse, nor cheat, nor drink, and they do good, are charitable, belong to the lodge or some benevolent order, and expect to get to Heaven upon their own goodness and righteousness. Ask one of them if he trusts Christ for salvation, if he worships God, if he contributes to His cause, if he loves and serves the Creator and Redeemer upon the principle of allegiance and devotion as a child its parents, as a beneficiary his benefactor, as a subject his king, and he will tell you, "No." God is under obligation to him, not he to God! At least, it is a matter of debit and credit, and God is on the debtor side of the account! Heaven is the result of covenant, a business transaction between him and his God; and he is expecting the reward upon the ground of his philosophical acumen or his moral self-righteousness. He is his own way, his own truth, and his own life.

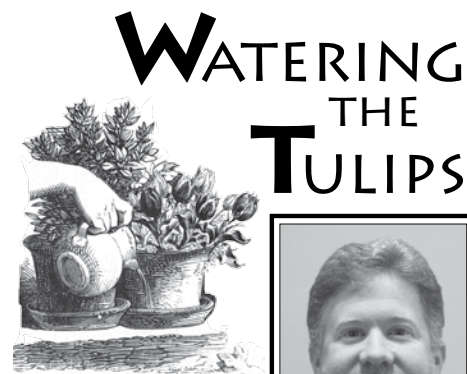
Well, now, this gentleman's bed is

simply too short and his covering is too narrow. It is not long nor broad enough for eternity. His covering is about like the fig-leaf garb of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and his foundation is about like their hiding-place from the eye of God. His self-righteous service is about like the offering of Cain, the works and fruits of his own hands, offered to God and rejected. The fig-leaves had to be taken off of Adam and Eve and the skins from the slain animal, the type of Christ crucified and of Christ's righteousness put on. The offering of blood by Abel, not the fruits of Cain, was acceptable, because it pointed to "the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world;" and our self-righteous and self-wise gentlemen will have to have Abel's blood as a foundation and Adam's lamb-skin as a covering to stand before God. Without Christ and His righteousness he shall never see God. Out of Christ, let me repeat, God is a consuming fire. Alas for all ritualism and formalism and self-righteousness even in the profession of Christianity! Even these are a bed too short, a blanket too narrow before God and angels and eternity.

We might speak of a number of sufficient things which this picture illustrates, but we must close with but a mere mention. In all the affairs and relationships of life men must have a "principle" to build upon and a "character" to cover with. The foundations of government, business, society, family, and individual integrity depend upon this idea of life and success. In every case failure follows life and effort, if principle and character be wanting. The politician whose only ambition is office and spoils, the business man whose only aspiration is money and ease, the preacher whose only ideal of his high office is reputation and place, the social butterfly whose only aim is admiration and conquest, the young man whose crowning hope is a good time in the world---builds his house in the desert, and, like the ostrich, covers his head in the sand. His foundation will be swept away in the flood, and his destiny will be uncovered by time and fate, which, like the hunter, pursue the game of fancy and folly to destruction. Man

has but three objects in existence: (1) to glorify God, (2) to help his fellowman, and (3) to develop himself, withal and by all, to the stature of manhood in Christ. Here is a principle on which to build and a character with which to clothe which time cannot destroy nor eternity take away. Any other principle or character is an insufficient foundation and an insufficient covering. The bed is shorter than a man can stretch out upon for eternity. The covering is narrower than that a man can wrap himself in for eternity. Life, temporal or eternal, must have true principles upon which to build and to rest, a true character with which to clothe and to cover.

(Character Sketches, 1898).



By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama



Has God Accepted You?

"And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him" (Gen. 4:6-7).

There is much talk today about sinners accepting the Lord. Yet, that is not necessarily in line with the language of the Bible. In fact, that terminology is never used in the Bible. Do not misunderstand, there certainly are some doctrinally sound believers that use such language. However, it is possible that many today are misled by its use. You see, man's need is not so much that he accepts God. Man's real need is that God accepts him!

Our text passage here speaks of a day when God rejected Cain. He and

his brother, Abel, had brought an offering to the Lord. Abel properly brought a bloody sacrifice that represented Jesus dying on the cross. Cain, on the other hand, brought the fruit of his own labor. God accepted Abel because he had the proper sacrifice. Cain was rejected because he sought fellowship with God through an unprescribed manner.

From the very beginning of Tabernacle worship, the goal was that God would accept their worship (Exodus 28:38). Not one time throughout the Old Testament was the goal for God to somehow become acceptable to man. He is acceptable! The Old Testament saints entered into their ceremonies realizing that they were the ones who were sinners and it was they who needed to somehow be accepted by the Lord. This could only be done when they approached God properly.

The New Testament is much the same. Of course, Jesus fulfilled all of the Mosaic Law and therefore we do not approach God in worship through the same methods as our Old Testament brethren. But still, our need today is to be accepted by the Lord. In Acts 10, we find Peter preaching to the house of Cornelius. There we read, **"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him"** (Acts 10:34-35). You see, man's great need is to be accepted by God.

So, how is man to be accepted by God? We know to be rejected means that a man will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15). God has plainly revealed that there is but one way to be accepted by Him. Ephesians 1:6 says, **"he hath made us accepted in the beloved."** That is, in Christ we are accepted. Jesus declared a similar truth in John 14:6 when He said, **"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."** Reader, **"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"** (I Tim. 2:5). Our prayer today is that God accepts you through Him. There is no other way.



Satan's Handiwork

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PHYSICAL TRIALS

Sickness, poverty and difficulties can be utilized by Satan to seek to destroy the witness and the testimony of those that serve and follow God. **"And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD. And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly"** (Job 1:12-22). This is rather a long passage of Scripture that we have just read, but I think you can see Satan's handiwork in the trials and the

disasters that came upon God's man, Job. Now, many of you might say that God is the One that cast these trials and disasters upon Job. But the passage that we have just read, clearly indicates that though God gave Satan the permission, it was Satan himself that brought the Sabeans upon Job; it was Satan that brought fire from heaven; it was Satan that brought the Chaldeans upon Job; and it was Satan that brought the great wind from the wilderness that collapsed the house that fell upon the children of Job. Satan is powerful, and Satan is terrible! Again, I know that he is nothing – and his power pales in comparison to our God. But when given room to work, and when given leeway by God almighty, there is no force on earth that can contend with the power, and might, and deviousness, and the cruelty that reside in Satan!

I want you to notice that these trials that Satan brought upon Job included even afflictions upon Job's body. **"And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips"** (Job 2:4-10). Again some might say, "Well, God will allow Satan certain powers when afflicting the possessions, or even the families of God's men. But God will always protect the person of those that are his." I disagree. I think that the passage that we have just read in Job proves that God will even allow Satan to attack God's people in a personal and physical way. Do you think that Job is the only exception that has ever lived? Or do you agree with me that God will

sometimes allow Satan to destroy the health – or even take the lives of those that are God's? What about all of the martyrs that are recorded in history? Do not you think that Satan had something to do with the deaths of those good and godly men and women that have gone on before?

(See also the blind man in John 9:1-3. See also the woman with the spirit of infirmity in Luke 13:1-5, 10-17. See also the Apostle Paul in II Corinthians 12:7).

I submit to you that but for the grace of God, and but for the providential care of God, every one of us would be so sick today, that we could not go to the Sunday church service – even if we had the desire to do so in our hearts. I tell you that Satan's power is immense, his hatred for the people of God is intense, and he will afflict us and persecute us to the very grave – except for the "hedge" of the power and grace of God that has been put about us.

PERSONAL ATTACKS

Secondly, I want you to think about the ways in which Satan uses others to attack and demean and persecute the children of God. In other words, the attacks of Satan are not just cases of him using his powers over natural creation or his powers over our environment; rather, Satan makes it a habit – and it is a part of his normal operating procedure – that he will use other men and women to attack us, demean us, and persecute us. (See Matt. 10:16-28).

Perhaps it would surprise you to know that sometimes these attacks against the children of God are even carried out by those that will one day serve the Lord. **"For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers"** (Gal. 1:13-14). Undoubtedly the devil did much work through Saul of Tarsus. And, Saul must have been a mighty weapon in the arsenal of Satan as he went about wreaking havoc amongst the people of God and the churches of Jesus Christ. In the end, I am certain it was a great loss to his cause when

Saul was converted there on the road to Damascus. In fact, I believe that in Saul of Tarsus (who became Paul the apostle) we have an example of God exerting His power and influence over that of Satan. In other words, Paul is a picture that according to the grace of God, and according to the purposes of God, the mightiest tool of Satan can be transformed (despite Satan's resistance) into the best and most profitable of servants to the Lord Jesus Christ!

Sometimes these attacks of Satan can even come from those that are saved by the grace of God. I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ recognized the "handiwork of Satan," even in the Apostle Peter: **"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men"** (Matt. 16:21-23). Maybe you have noticed in your life (as I have in mine), that sometimes you follow the flesh rather than the Spirit of God. I am sure that when you follow the flesh, then Satan will get a hold of you to some degree, and he will manipulate you and use you to accomplish somewhat of his plans. Well, sadly, this even happened in the case of the Apostle Peter. In fact, just a few verses after he makes one of the best and most credible confessions of faith in Jesus Christ that is recorded in the Bible (see Matt. 16:16); Peter then goes on to speak the very words that Satan would have wanted him to speak when he speaks out against the Lord's going to Jerusalem to be killed. It is important to note that when the Lord turns to Peter to respond to him He addresses Satan, and not Peter. I know, in a way, He is addressing Peter because Peter has succumbed to his own fleshly weaknesses and the power of the devil. But in reality, Jesus Christ is letting us know that the devil (Satan) is very powerful! And he

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is liable to get to any one of us, except God would be with us and preserve us and keep us!

You might think that the only sign of Satan's handiwork amongst the apostles of Jesus Christ was the work that Satan did through Judas Iscariot. But the passage in Matthew 16 proves that Satan's handiwork was even visible in the first and foremost of the apostles, Simon Peter. I want you to realize that if Satan could get to Peter – when Peter stood and walked in the very presence of Jesus Christ; then surely, you and I had best beware of Satan! Peter knew firsthand what he was talking about when he described Satan as a “roaring lion,” and as an adversary that is walking “about, seeking whom he may devour.”

MORTAL WEAKNESSES

Maybe the most common of our foes (which Satan will utilize) is our own fleshly nature, and the mortal weakness which afflicts us all. **“Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears”** (II Cor. 7:4-5). “Satan's handiwork” can be seen on the outside, but also on the inside of mankind. Sometimes when we think we are strong, we suddenly become very weak. Sometimes when we think that we are full of faith, we suddenly become faithless. Sometimes when we think we love the Lord more than we ever have, we suddenly lose our devotion. Why is this, and how can this be? Well, obviously, the truth lies in the fact that we are servants of God in the spirit, but we are bound to this flesh and mortality in this life.

Here is what Paul had to say on this matter: **“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.**

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin” (Rom. 7:14-25). Now I don't want you (or me) to use this as an excuse, but the truth is that Satan and his minions are constantly attacking us from the inside. Our flesh and our mortality is weak! We are constantly attracted to the lusts and the desires of the flesh. Our minds wander from the things of God to the things of the flesh. One moment we will be basking in the glory and the knowledge of unimaginable wonders in the glory of God and the glory of the heavens; and, the next moment we are thinking of some way in which we might satisfy some sudden urge or desire that has come upon us in the

flesh. What a quandary our beings are in! The spirit will draw us one way, and the flesh (oftentimes manipulated by Satan or one of his followers) will draw us in the opposite way.

And then, sometimes it is just simply the mortal frailties that will be our obstacle. We will feel strong, and then suddenly Satan will remind us that we are weak. We will demonstrate some zeal and some desire for God, and then Satan will remind us that the flesh and the body is tired. Satan will say, “Why go to church tonight? You are tired, and you need to rest. You have worked hard today (and you did much good work); why should you wear yourself out by going to church now?” O, wretched men that we are! Where is our deliverance from these weaknesses, temptations, and trials that Satan (and we ourselves) brings upon us? As Paul said, our only hope is in, through, and by Jesus Christ our Lord.

SPIRITUAL HERESIES

Lastly, I want to think about the “spiritual heresies” that are all around us. When we think of Satan's handiwork, I suppose that we very often think of the spiritual realm, and how that Satan has introduced heresies and hypocrites into every generation of God's people. Really, even before the Christian era, the devil would infiltrate the ranks of the peoples of God, and men and women would be led astray by the imposters and the false professors amongst them. (See the example of Balaam: Num. 22-24; Josh. 13:22; II Pet. 2:15; Jude 1:11; Rev. 2:14. See the example of Korah: Num. 16:1-35).

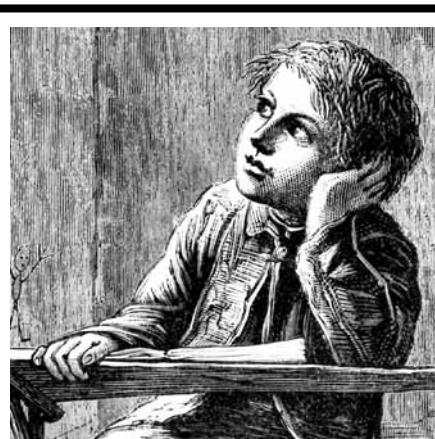
And of course, in the church age we have plenty of examples of the heresies and impersonations of the servants of Satan. **“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction”** (II Pet. 2:1). Peter made sure to warn his readers that just as the devil had infiltrated the ranks of the prophets and servants of God in the Old Testament, even so would he do in the New Testament.

Paul said, **“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter**

times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (I Tim. 4:1-2). Consider how that the Jews opposed Christ and Christians. History shows us that they sought to subvert the doctrine of the churches of Jesus Christ. They sought to incorporate their legalistic ways into the age of grace. And then consider how that world sought to compromise on the teachings of the churches and preachers of Jesus Christ. And notice how they had a desire to keep some of the world with them, even as they thought to embark upon the ways of grace and salvation. Finally, consider how that the false churches have persecuted the Baptists down through the ages! And, consider how that, even now, the world of religion tries to convert everyone to their mainstream ideas and agendas, so that no one really stands for anything of substance. Consider how that doctrine has become, in many ways, a dirty word, or a politically incorrect term, in what passes for Christianity today.

I want you to know and to realize that this “watering down” of today's Christianity is the work of Satan! I want you to recognize that for the past 2000 years Satan has been using lies, heresies, hypocrites, false doctrine, and the works and ways of men to defile and contaminate the churches of Jesus Christ, and even the Kingdom of God on this earth. He did his best to stamp out entirely those that would serve the Lord in truth and in spirit. He did his best to erase the church of Christ from the face of the earth – but the gates of Hell could not prevail against the power and authority of Jesus Christ, which is vested in His church. Now, for the last few centuries, Satan has worked against the things of God, for the most part, from within the ranks of so-called Christianity, or the religious world in general. And I suppose that he has now had his greatest success. **“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also**

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FORGOT SOMETHING?

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be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (II Cor. 11:13-15).

I look at the religious world around me today and I recognize "Satan's handiwork." Would to God that the Lord would give us revival, and a new heart, and a new desire within the ranks of Christianity, and even within the ranks of the churches of Jesus Christ!

CONCLUSION

I want to leave you with this thought (or warning): Satan is very active all around us. We may not always attribute the things that happen to us and around us to the work of Satan; but let me tell you that he is powerful, and he works through many

persons and many aspects of creation. He is the prince of the power of the air. He is the ruler of the spirits of darkness. He has power over much of this creation. He is the master of all of those that are currently in spiritual darkness. I believe that if you will only take the time to be studious and aware of your surroundings, you will recognize the "handiwork of Satan" all around you – and even within yourself. He will attack your body. He will attack your mind. He will attack you through your family and friends. He will attack you through religion. He will attack you with the very powers of nature. Be warned! Trust in the power and the grace of God and His Son Jesus Christ! This is the only help and the only defense that you and I have against our powerful foe!



New Testament church, the people are to provide for the maintenance of the gospel light and the preaching of the Word of the Lord. They may not themselves see much of the work that is done in connection with the house of God, as the praying and studying of the man of God, the administration of the house of God, and the prayer of other faithful church members for the church and the ministry of God's Word. They must recognize and own their interest in the ministry of the Lord's church.

The lampstand symbolized the office work of Christ while He was in the world, and the work which He has designated to His churches as His official representatives in the world (Ex. 25:31-39). The light of the lampstand would not burn without the oil, and the churches of God cannot shine as lights in the world unless they are filled with and led by the Holy Spirit. The light of the lampstand was to burn continually; and the light of truth should be always shining from the churches of the living God (Phil. 2:15-16; Rev. 1:20). The people of God are to be the source of light in a sin-darkened world. Every member of this church needs to feel and own his or her responsibility associated with keeping this light shining, the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Every member of this church needs to feel and own his or her total dependence upon the grace of God supplied by the Holy Spirit in order to fulfill this responsibility (Zech. 14:1-14).

II. VERSES FIVE THROUGH NINE.

The instructions for the making of the shewbread and the replacing of the twelve loaves with loaves freshly made every weekly sabbath are here given. God precisely described the amount of "fine flour" to be used, and the number of "cakes" to be baked, and the arrangement of the "cakes" in "rows . . . upon the pure table before the LORD." The "pure table" was the table of shewbread, which was made of shittim wood and overlaid with gold, and symbolically speaks of Christ as the One through whom the believer has fellowship with God (Ex. 25:23-30). The placement of the "twelve cakes" of bread in this manner in the holy place signifies the office work

of Christ in both representing and presenting His people in the presence of God. **"And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the LORD."** The frankincense, which was normally included with a meal offering (Lev. 2), refers symbolically to the work of Christ, which, being in all ways pleasing to the Father, makes His people acceptable unto God. This was placed alongside each row of six loaves, and was burned upon the altar of the Lord, as the bread was given to the priests every sabbath day.

"Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant." This bread is referred to in other places as "the continual bread" (Num. 4:7), as it was continually renewed and always upon the table before the presence of the Lord. Christ ever liveth to make intercession for His people, and has an unchanging, continual priesthood. He is also the continual food of His people. Every seventh-day sabbath the bread upon the table was replaced with freshly baked loaves, and the old bread became the portion of the priests. **"And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute."** Only those who were consecrated were to eat of this bread (I Sam. 21:1-6). This bread being eaten by the priests shows how that those who are represented by Christ in the presence of God also live by Christ, and by communion and fellowship with Him. We live by the one who was "most holy" and who made of Himself an "offering . . . unto the LORD" (John 6:48-58).

III. VERSES TEN THROUGH TWELVE.

The giving of the law is here interrupted with the record of an event which took place in the camp of Israel. **"And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel: and this son of the Israelitish woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp."**

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- A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS -

By Timothy Hille
of Ashland, Illinois

Chapter Twenty-Four – Holy Appointments: Provisions for the Holy Place, and Penalties for Unholy Conduct

This chapter has been very appropriately outlined by some as "THE HOLY LIGHT, THE HOLY BREAD, AND THE HOLY NAME."¹ As the previous chapter dealt with holy times of appointed worship, so this deals with holy provisions for worship which the people were responsible to maintain. This general principle is still true today: certain requirements for worship and certain aspects of worship activity are to be maintained by the people of God (I Tim. 3:15). In these things both priest and people were joined. If we would all see God's commands reaching to each and every one of us individually, and would acknowledge our responsibility to God under His commands, then we who make up a local, visible body of Christ would all be properly and profitably united in the service of the Lord.

Chapter Outline

- i. The Oil for the Lamps: vs. 1-4
- ii. The Shewbread: vs. 5-9
- iii. A Case of Blasphemy: vs. 10-12
- iv. The Law of Blasphemy: vs. 13-



16
v. The Law of Murder and Personal Damages Restated: vs. 17-22
vi. The Execution of the Law: vs. 23

I. VERSES ONE THROUGH FOUR.

The Lord here gives further instructions to the people through Moses, His appointed leader and teacher of the people. **"Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually."** This was God's requirement of the people, that they provide this pure oil of olives for the maintenance of the golden lampstand which was in the holy place of the tabernacle (Ex. 27:20-21). The lamps upon the golden lampstand were "to burn continually," and not be permitted to go out for lack of fuel. The priest was responsible for trimming the lamps every day. The people would never see the light of the lamp, for it was placed within the holy place, where only the priests would minister to the Lord. They would not see the priest ordering the lamps day by day. Nevertheless, they were to provide the oil for the light. In the

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The Word of God here records the parties involved in this event which disrupted the order of the camp and here served to interrupt the giving and recording of the divine appointments. The primary person in this event was a young man who was **"the son of an Israelitish woman"** and an Egyptian father. He was doubtless one of **"the mixed multitude"** which went up out of Egypt with the children of Israel when they departed following the night of the passover (Ex. 12:37-38; Num. 11:4-10). This **"mixed multitude"** was a source of trouble to God's people. This young man was the product of a mixed marriage between a woman of Israel and an Egyptian man. Many problems have arisen in churches and the lives of children of God because of believers who have married unbelievers, and Baptists who have married non-Baptists (II Cor. 6:14-18).

"Mixed marriages have ever been prolific in mischief. Of these sprang the monsters, viz. not so much in stature as in iniquity, who provoked the Deluge. Even Dibri, the father of Shelomith, was remotely responsible for the blasphemy of her son, by consenting to her marriage with an alien. How careful we should be never to commit a wrong, since no man can tell how prolific it may be in mischief! The day of judgment will declare it."²

This young man, whose name is not given, **"went out among the children of Israel"** meaning out into the camp, and became a participant in a quarrel with **"a man of Israel . . . in the camp."** The motive back of the strife that here took place is not recorded; and though many have conjectured as to the cause, God's Word does not record the cause. The teaching is here plain, that strife can be the downfall of any person, regardless of the cause. Therefore we are warned in the Bible that **"the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient"** (I Tim. 2:24), (James 1:19-21; Eph. 4:26-32; Prov. 14:17; 25:28; 29:22).

"And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the LORD, and cursed." Either during

the striving or as a result of the outcome of the quarrel between this man and his Israelite opponent, this man irreverently and dishonorably used the name of the Lord, even to the extent that he used God's name in cursing, and cursed the very name of God. This is the very sin which is so commonly committed in this day and age in which we live, in which profanity and obscenity are thought of as acceptable, and even desirable, in the common speech of the majority of society. Using God's name in vain and in cursing is a prevalent sin, and is even found among professing Christians, much to the shame of the hour (Ex. 20:7). Perhaps this young man cursed the God of the children of Israel in an attempt to wound the conscience of the Israelite with whom he strove. Nevertheless, when a person blasphemes the name of God, he or she declares himself or herself to be openly against the Person and the purpose of God.

"LET US START WITH THE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH THAT THE NAME OF GOD IS THE REVELATION OF HIS CHARACTER IN WORD. Hence to take up the Name of God lightly is to treat His character lightly. It is, in fact, to despise the Person, and is nothing less than treason against the Supreme King. The individual who blasphemes 'the Name' would take up arms against the Person, and so must be treated as a rebel."³

"MAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS GOD'S NAME DETERMINES HIS CHARACTER. In other words, the Name of God is the touchstone of human character. The person who curseth the holy Name, as this reckless youth did, is thereby judged. He has voluntarily set himself against the Almighty, he has become a rebel not in heart only but openly, and if the Most High is to exercise His authority, the blasphemer should die. It is, moreover, a mistake to imagine, because sentence is not now executed so speedily against blasphemers, that their awful sin has become less heinous in the lapse of ages."³

"And they brought him unto Moses: (and his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan:) and they put him in ward, that the mind of the LORD might be shewed them." This

is the only mention of this family, which was on the Israelitish side **"of the tribe of Dan."** We do not know whether Dibri, this young man's maternal grandfather, or his mother Shelomith, were for the main part godly persons or no. We may observe two things, however, that whether parents be godly or not, they may have ungodly children; and that the actions of children can be a reproach to parents (I Tim. 3:4; I Sam. 2:12-17; 22-36; 3:11-14). This young man was brought by the people unto Moses so that it might be determined what punishment should befall him for the crime which he committed. No particular law having yet been given to deal with this sin, only a general commandment, they placed him in safekeeping until they should know the will of God concerning the matter. Sin is such a serious matter, that it ought always to be dealt with according to **"the mind of the LORD,"** and not the thinking and reasoning of men, no matter how seemingly wise those men may be. Thus, all of the Lord's churches ought to earnestly and sincerely follow the instructions of the Scriptures when dealing with sin in their members.

IV. VERSES THIRTEEN THROUGH SIXTEEN.

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying . . ." The instructions which follow were given by God Himself, and therefore they were to be carried out in a most solemn, reverent, and complete manner. The instructions were that the man who had **"cursed"** was to be brought **"without [outside] the camp,"** where, the witnesses of his sin attesting thereto by laying **"their hands upon his head,"** he was to be put to death. The means of capital punishment was to be that **"all the congregation"** should **"stone him."** This was to serve to put away sin from among the people, that God's wrath come not on the congregation; and to warn all others against so sinning themselves. **"And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin."** This sin was to be imputed to the person who committed it, and his or her guilt was not to be excused, out of sympathy for his or her circumstances, out of a false sense of self deprecation on the part

of the magistrate, or out of a regard for his or her particular person: in short, any of the various reasons for which sentence against evil works is not carried out today. In that the witnesses laid their hands upon the head of the guilty person, they showed (1) that they understood the gravity of the matter in which they were participating as witnesses; (2) that they had no complicity in the sin which was committed; and (3) that they themselves were seeking to be promoters of truth and righteousness. No action which is taken to deal with sin in the midst of any people should be entered into lightly, or for any reason other than (1) the honor and glory of God as the source of all truth and justice, and (2) the health and welfare of the society in which all participating are a part.

God gave the people this law of blasphemy, and they were to be faithful to carry out the law as God gave it to them. The same law which applied to those **"born in the land,"** native children of Israel, also applied to **"the stranger."** There was one standard of righteousness over all, as there is one God over all, who shall judge the living and the dead (Rom. 2:11-16; 3:29-30). If the people and their rulers were not faithful to execute this law, they would show themselves to be on the side of the lawbreaker rather than on the side of God: on the side of sin, rather than on the side of holiness. Many in churches today are showing themselves to be on the wrong side by their neglecting to put away sin from their midst according to the rules which God has given in His Word to His churches (Matt. 18:15-17; II Thess. 3:14-15).

V. VERSES SEVENTEEN THROUGH TWENTY-TWO.

God here revisits some particular laws which had already been given, as the law of murder and the law of compensation for personal damages (Ex. 21:12). God is here restating these laws in connection with the law of blasphemy, which was a capital offence, to reinforce the authority of civil rulers in dispensing justice and punishment for transgressions of the law. God instituted capital punishment for murder, and God requires that civil magistrates

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faithfully execute this law (Rom. 13:1-4). God's laws were both equitable and righteous. For damage to a person's property, or a person's own self, that law required the punishment be equal to the crime. These punishments were not to be carried out personally, by way of personal vengeance, the victim taking, as it were, the law into his or her own hands. Rather, these laws were to be executed by the civil authorities and rulers of the people; and the people were to willingly obey the rulers as they carried out these laws.

"Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger [sojourner], as for one of your own country: for I am the LORD your God." For all persons living as private citizens within Israel, the same law applied. The basis of Israel's law was the Being and character of their God, who was Jehovah, the great I AM. No nation ever had so high or honorable of a law as did the nation of Israel, which they received by commandment from God (Deut. 4:5-8; Ps. 147:19-20). We whom the Lord has saved have received the law of God in our hearts and minds by the operation of the Holy Spirit; and to receive such an high and holy and honorable through such a gracious means ought to humble us and cause us to earnestly seek to obey the Lord's commandments.

VI. VERSE TWENTY-THREE.

We have in these verses which have been before us a lesson in the purpose of the law. The purpose of the law is to impute sin to those who are guilty of sin, and to display the righteousness of God in justice and in wrath against sin (Rom. 5:13-14; Gal. 3:19-24; I Tim. 1:8-11). The law reveals the sin that is in men, charges them with their sins, and demands the just penalty of sin, which is the death of the sinner (Heb. 12:25). God spoke on earth when He gave the law through Moses; and those who broke the law of Moses died without mercy. If you will not heed the message of God which today is spoken from heaven by the heavenly One, Jesus Christ, even through His gospel ministers, you will die without

mercy for all eternity in the lake of fire, which is the second death.

"And Moses spake to the children of Israel, that they should bring forth him that had cursed out of the camp, and stone him with stones." Moses was faithful in teaching the people the commandments of the Lord. **"And the children of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses."** The people were faithful to obey the law of God. When we obey God, we are saying by our actions that (1) we believe in God, that He is our King and only Potentate, and the Righteous Judge of all the earth; and (2) we trust God, that His laws are for His ultimate and highest glory and our utmost and eternal good.

NOTES

1. Hille, Harry J. "Outlines on Leviticus," 1979.
2. MacDonald, J. A. *The Pulpit Commentary*.
3. Edgar, R. M. *The Pulpit Commentary*.



A Red Horse of War

(Continued from page 21) ♦

the reign of the Man of Sin on the earth.

WHAT IS THE RED HORSE

The color of this horse is fiery red according to the Greek text, a color something like what we call a golden bay. This color is said to be compounded of the yellow-red mixed with dusky. It is applied to horses by the classical Greek writers. This horse is the same color as the Dragon in Revelation 12:3. This fire-colored horse denotes the bloody wars inflicted by the kingdom of Antichrist.

The white horse signified a series of peaceful victories with minor conflicts. But the red horse suggests a period of slaughter and bloodshed. John says the horseman will **"take peace from the earth."** The sword given him is the prophetic symbol of war. Thus red, the color of the horse, is the symbol of blood, and the sword a symbol of war. Here is seen the methods of Antichrist will lead to insubordination and civil wars among the nations.

This interpretation of the red horse is confirmed by the Saviour in

His Olivet discourse. He prophesied of these events by saying: **"And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom"** (Matt. 24:6-7). Ever since the ascension of our Lord to Heaven wars have been frequent during the past 1900 years. The soil of earth is saturated with human blood.

"THEY SHALL KILL ONE ANOTHER"

This expression means more than merely men killing one another in ordinary warfare. It represents not only conflict between nations but also civil wars and revolutions within nations. Here is seen the murderous hatred of one portion of the citizens exercised against another portion. The red horse pictures a time of bloody commotions all over the face of the earth. This symbol means human passions raging in all forms of bloodshed while the authorities of state strive in vain to end the rebellion.

The condition which existed in Israel in the days of Asa are to be revived and intensified. **"And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries. And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity"** (II Chron. 15:5-6).

Nations will be in such disorder that their citizens will spend the daytime in shedding blood and the night in fear. Imagine, if you can, a world where lawlessness and selfishness rule supreme. This is class fighting and racial wars. These fighters ambush in the night and assassinate in the day. This is Americans killing Americans, Russians killing Russians, British killing British, Germans killing Germans, the whole planet in a ferment of blood and revolution. The red horse is open, armed, civil rebellion of man against man, glutting their vengeance and spilling blood like water. This is the awful scene presented to us under the second seal, a state which is infinitely

worse than all former conceivable wars of the past.

Satan is working night and day to set the stage for this awful conflict. Human life is cheap in our generation. Hatred among the races is growing and breaking out in bloodshed. Women are rising up against the men, and children are standing up against their parents. Truly the love of many waxes cold because of abounding sin (Matt. 24:12). These conditions are to wax worse and worse until there is international slaughter, civil butchery, and private revenge and murder.

This is the time foretold by the Apostle Paul: **"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape"** (I Thess. 5:3).

KILLING THE ORDER OF THE DAY

The tribulation period is characterized by murder. Men are to be killed **"with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth"** under the four horses of the Apocalypse. John saw martyred souls under the altar in Heaven which are told to rest until their brethren be killed as they were (Rev. 6:11). The killer-beast of Revelation 13:1-10 is said to kill the two witnesses (Rev. 11:7). The False Prophet kills all the non-beast worshipers. The scarlet whore of Revelation 17 is **"drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus"** (v. 6).

During the first three and a half years of Antichrist's rule over half of earth's population is destined to be killed. Revelation 6:8 discloses that one-fourth of earth's population will die under the four horses of the Apocalypse. In Revelation 9:15 we learn that under the sixth trumpet four angels are loosed **"to slay the third part of men."** It is difficult for us to conceive of this mass slaughter. The present world population is about four billion. If half of the present population dies, then there would be two billion people a corpse. Such horrifying events will be sufficient to demonstrate Satan as a murderer (John 8:44).

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. I would like to hear your opinions or expositions on Matthew 16:28? - Kentucky

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“Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom” (Matt. 16:28).

There is much controversy over what Jesus was meaning here, and some believe it is referring to His millennium reign when He will judge the nations for a thousand years. Also, many believe the answer is found in the next chapter when He was **“transfigured before them”** Peter, James, and John (Matt. 17:1-2). It is our belief that even though there may be some evidence to support these views, it is not how we see it.

First, **“There be some standing here”** to me would suggest that Jesus is literally meaning those that are before Him at the time of this statement. Now, these folks would all be long dead for them to see Jesus coming to set up His thousand year reign (Kingdom), **“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen”** (Rev. 1:7). Unless you believe as those who claim to be Gospel Millennialists (aka, Amillennialists), they are those who say we are in the thousand year reign right now and Satan is chained in the bottomless pit, which we believe to be utterly ridiculous.

Second, He told Peter, James and John, **“And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead”** (Matt. 17:9). So I do not believe it is referring to the transfiguration on the mountain.

So, what we believe, to answer the question, is in that latter part of Matthew 17:9, **“until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.”** We believe this to be the most vital part of our salvation, that Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead and His ascension to heaven.

“That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles” (Acts 26:23).

“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4).

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (I Cor. 15:3).

“And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (I Cor. 15:4).

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept” (I Cor. 15:20).

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1).

“Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel” (II Tim. 2:8).

“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” (I Pet. 1:3).

Allow me to ask this question; what is the Kingdom Jesus is talking about? I believe it to be composed only of those who have been born

again, **“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son”** (Col. 1:13). Without this (the resurrection from the dead) all would be in vain. So the Kingdom to me is the great power of the gospel as we see more and more added to His glorious Kingdom. This is what I believe our Lord was talking about in Matthew 16:28, **“There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.”** I believe that some standing there are some of the ones in Acts 1 and 2.

The Kingdom plainly put what is in Matthew 16:28 is from the time the first person was saved until He comes back to take us home. We have been given the privilege of living in this Kingdom. But that is what I believe...God Bless!

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“Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom” (Matt. 16:28) Obviously by this time I am writing this verse, those “some” standing there, have tasted of death. We can and are able to ascertain that the second advent of Christ has not come, if that is what He is speaking of.

There had to be a point in time that the two greatest forms of worship had to be distinguished in the eyes of Israel and the Gentiles. To the Gentiles the Hebrew way of worship was all but closed to them. When the Gospel began to be preached and the Jews rejected the council of God, the Gospel was then preached to the nations, and was well received.

The day of Pentecost when the Church was baptized with the Holy Spirit signaled that the Lord's Church was now the accepted place and institution of worship to God. The veil having been torn from top to bottom in the temple when Christ

died on the cross.

The destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. marked the death knell for the Hebrew way of worship, the ceremonial law. The destruction of the Temple took away all the blood lines of all the priests. Since all this happened, the Church, the Gospel, and all of the Elect of God are the Kingdom of the son of God.

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This is a prophecy of our Lord. Usually, after a prophecy has been fulfilled, it is easy to look back and understand it (NOW, I see it!). In the case of this prophecy, we have differing opinions among scholars (hence the beloved reader's question). I will mention four expositions, then give my opinion...

First, what it is not referring to. Preterism is the teaching that this passage spoke of the generation of Christ, Himself, in the First Century AD. Full preterism claims fulfillment of all end times prophecy in AD 70 when the Roman general Titus destroyed Jerusalem. Coupled with several other verses taken out of context, a whole new doctrine has emerged.

Preterism cannot be accurate fulfillment of prophecy, because it does not conform with the end times outline given by our Lord in Matthew 24. There the Lord clearly lays out for the disciples when the end of the age is to come. Verses 3-14 contain the perilous times of the latter days in which we currently live! (I Tim. 4:1/II Tim. 3:1/etc) We can see these 10 prophetic events have been (or are being) fulfilled in our time (21st Century), but no way were they all fulfilled in AD 70. Again, the advantage of looking back with more 20/20 vision! Verse 13 proclaims the PreTribulational rapture, and then verses 15-28 cover the Great Tribulation. The outline in Matthew 24 is concluded as verses 29-31 show

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. In Ezra 9:4, is “everyone that trembled at the words of God” talking about those out of fellowship (backslidden)? - Kentucky

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“Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law” (Ezra 10:3). No, these were the peoples that obeyed Gods commands. **“For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word”** (Isa. 66:2).

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I think it included everyone who was convicted of their sin and rebellion against God. They were struck with a holy fear of the Almighty and were smitten with remorse that led to repentance as they heard the words of God. Peter had a similar response when the Lord convicted him of his sin of denial: **“And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly”** (Luke 22:61-62). Oh, that God would give us hearts that would tremble at His Word! Oh, that sin would become exceedingly sinful in our eyes causing us to tremble over

our transgressions, rebellion, and worldliness! May God be pleased to revive us with a greater sense of His presence and the power of His Word in our daily lives.

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If I understand the question, my answer would have to be No; verse 4 is not talking about the ones that are out of fellowship (backslidden). It is just the opposite. The ones that were trembling are those who respected the Word of God, and the things written in it; they were the ones who feared to break the laws of God, and were trembling at His judgments which might come on those who transgressed against His Law.

If you read the verses proceeding verse 4 you'll see that Ezra and those that were gathered together with him were astonished at the fact that Israel had just been released from captivity and were still living in their sin, **“And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished (astonished NKJV). Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished (astonished NKJV) until the evening sacrifice”** (Ezra 9:3-4). What they were astonished at was their kinfolk just got released and were still disobeying God's law (in other words they didn't learn a thing). And Ezra and those in his company were trembling at the thought that God's judgment might cause them to be put back into captivity once again meaning all

of Israel (that is including Ezra and those that were with him), which we now know that they (Israel) were, read Daniel and Jeremiah. I think verse 1-2 explains quite well what the problem was, **“Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass”** (Ezra 9:1-2). I like the way the NKJV puts it so I am adding it for you to read as well, so the reader can compare, “When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of those lands. Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass” (Ezra 9:1-2). Notice, they did not separate themselves from these other nations as God had commanded! They were the ones out of fellowship with God (backslidden).

This has always been Israel's problem; they just refuse to be obedient, just like America is today! We too should be fearful and tremble because of the sin of America. Just as Ezra includes himself as forsaking God's commandments (vv. 9-10), so does Daniel include himself for the sin of God's people, notice not sins but sin, **“And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God”** (Dan. 9:20).

We are too quick I believe to point the finger at others. My feelings are that the ones responsible for Americas condition are true Baptists...we have failed to get the message out. We sit back and see the sin of America and fail to ask God to forgive us as well. I believe we are responsible.

I would encourage you dear reader to study all of chapter 9 along with Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel, I could name many more to compare and study. To get a real good look at Israel's problem or attitude concerning their sin, please read the Book of Judges! As my pastor says, God help us and God bless you. May God Bless America! God Bless!

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I don't believe it is. I think in fact that the very opposite is true! This phrase in the context contrasts the backslidden Jews with the fervent, holy remnant. I believe that every child of God should strive for such a title as being **“one that trembled at the words of the God”**...! Selah! Think about it!

Here are a couple of reasons why I think that this phrase is talking about the godly remnant. First of all, I believe it is describing those princes in the first three verses, **“Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass. And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and**

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A Red Horse of War

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THE DIVINE JUDGMENT OF WAR

The rider of the white horse had a bow and was given a crown. The rider of the red horse is given power and a sword. Doubtless, the giver of this power and sword is Satan (Rev. 13:2). But Satan is permitted to do this by the permission of God. God permits this slaughter under the red horse as a judgment against a godless world. There are times when the righteous Judge calls **"for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth"** (Jer. 25:29).

Judges 2:14 proves that God does use war at times as a judgment against sins committed: **"And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies."**

MAN A WAR-MONGER

Since the time sin entered the human race in Eden warfare and bloodshed have plagued the earth. Ever since Cain killed Abel the story of man has been the history of war. The pages of time drip with the blood of wretches who could not live together in peace. Although there have been times of momentary peace in man's history, yet for no longer than fifty years at one time has the world truly known peace. Somewhere nations or tribes have been engaged in the inhuman cruel business of exterminating each other.

Why must the nations of the earth always be at each other's throats? Why must the soil of earth be soaked in human blood? The first reason is because man is a totally depraved sinner. All the contentions, controversy and conflict on earth arise from man's corrupt nature inherited from Adam. James puts his finger on the trouble in his epistle: **"From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war. . ." (Jas. 4:1-2).** Wicked men's feet are

swift to shed blood (Rom. 3:14-17). **"There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked"** (Isa. 48:22).

Second, men cannot have peace on earth because they reject God's laws. Lasting peace on earth can only come by obedience to God's laws. Isaiah 48:18 says: **"O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river."**

Third, as long as men reject the blood of Christ their blood must flow. National peace is the outgrowth of spiritual peace. Men have no peace with their fellow creatures because they are not at peace with God. War can only end when man is given a new nature and a new body.

THE HISTORY OF WAR

Man commenced war on a local scale in his early history. One tribe would fight against another tribe. Each sought superior weaponry and skill over the other. Finally, kings and lords broadened the field of conflict by causing whole nations to fight against one another. Samuel told Israel if they chose a king that this ruler would send their sons off to war with other nations (I Sam. 8:11-12). Israel found this to be a true saying. When Israel went into captivity powerful warlike Gentile nations begin to dominate the world scene.

As late as the eighteenth century war continued to be basically an affair of kings and statesmen. Most of the fighting was done by either trained mercenaries or professional soldiers. But all of this changed with the French Revolution. Suddenly the common man thrust himself into the arena of national, political and military affairs. From that time forth war involved millions of people.

Thanks to the Industrial Revolution, war was taken to a new height. Suddenly there appeared the locomotive, the steamship, the machine gun, and the repeating rifle. Men learned new means of death and destruction. The World Wars 1914-18 and 1939-45 caused a rain of terror. Mass murder of millions of helpless humans became quite common.

The cost of war in regard to human lives has been extremely high. In the American Revolution 9,000 lost their lives. In the Civil War an estimated 498,332 died. The total losses of

lives in World War I were estimated 10,000,000 soldiers and an equal number of civilians. In World War II an estimated 17,000,000 soldiers were killed and 43,000,000 civilians died. About 5,000,000 lost their lives in the Korean War, and 2,031,707 were slaughtered in the Vietnam War before America gave that country to the Communists.

THE FEAR OF NUCLEAR WAR

Today the nations of earth now have enough destructive weapons to literally blow this planet to bits. The plain truth is that the destruction of earth could be accomplished with a tiny fraction of the total nuclear weaponry that is now in existence. Today the U. S. has a defense force that can deliver the equivalent of 369,769 Hiroshima sized bombs. Russia has 718,538 Hiroshima's ready for instant dispersal. Together Russia and the U. S. have over 7,000 times the destructive power of all the bombs the Allies dropped on Germany and Japan in World War II. There is the equivalent of five tons of TNT for every man, woman and child on the face of the earth.

The fear of thermonuclear war is more terrifying since small nations have modest stockpiles of doomsday weapons. No longer are these restricted to U. S., Russia, France, England, and China. Now India, and Israel have entered the field. Egypt, Argentina, Brazil, Pakistan and South Africa are not far behind.

The impact nuclear warfare could have on the environment can be described as super catastrophic. No part of the world would escape exposure to biologically significant levels of radiation. An all-out nuclear war could play havoc with the earth's life-preserving ozone layer. These would have to be added to the instant incineration of millions and the maimed millions who survived. Thermonuclear war is a serious and solemn reality.

After over 14,000 wars in man's history the rapid arms race goes on. No wonder the Bible describes the rulers of earth as wild beasts. In pure madness the nuclear arms race goes unchecked.

MAN'S SEARCH FOR PEACE

Until recent times peace was considered as just the interval

between wars. At the present time among Western democracies peace is considered the normal elation, yet the habit of thinking of war as the normal relationship between states continues to live in the minds of many.

Man does not like to live under the constant threat of nuclear annihilation. He wants to live in security, happiness, and prosperity. During man's long history he has tried every device imaginable to bring peace: peace pacts, treaties, alliances, balances of power, and various leagues of temporarily friendly nations.

The League of Nations was formed shortly after World War I. It was established "to promote international cooperation and to achieve international peace. But, regrettable to say, the League of Nations utterly failed to preserve peace, for World War II broke out in a few years.

At the close of World War II in 1945 representatives of fifty of the world's leading nations met and accepted a charter for a world peace organization. The U.N. Charter states that "all members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means and "shall refrain in the their international relations from the threat or use of force." But despite efforts of the U.N. Security Council, over 60 wars have been fought since World War II.

The United Nations is man's latest and last means of bringing about peace. But its efforts are doomed to failure because no world body composed of disjointed, divided, and discordant groups of sovereign nations can ever hope to achieve peace. Nations in the U.N. always put their own interest above the interest of the world. The members of the U.N. talk of peace, but at the same time they increase their budgets to buy more war machines and lay out plans for anti-ballistic missile systems.

Man has always resorted to war to attain peace. Since the dawn of history men have been constantly locked in deadly combat, striving for peace, yet when looking **"for the time of healing"** they have found only **"trouble"** (Jer. 14:19). However commendable man's search for peace may be it is futile. The Prophet Daniel declared that **"to the end there shall**

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A Red Horse of War

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be war, and desolations are decreed" (Dan. 7:26 improved translation). Whatever dreams men may now entertain concerning lasting peace will be shortly shattered on the plains of Megiddo when all nations engage in Armageddon. Wars such as men have never dreamed about are ahead under the red horse of Revelation 6:3-4.

WILL PEACE COME?

Must this strife-torn, war weary earth never have lasting peace? Is Utopia only a dream never to be realized? I am glad to say that there is going to be peace on earth and good will among men in the very near future. But this lasting peace will only come about when God Himself resorts to war with depraved man: **"In righteousness he doth judge and make war"** (Rev. 19:11). Our world is now speeding toward Armageddon. Armageddon is the last war in which sinful men will engage. It is Hiroshima and Nagasaki a thousand times multiplied. It is the horror and brutality of World War II multiplied a million times.

But, thank God, Jesus Christ and His saints are going to return and bring an end to this fantastic picture. Then the thousands of years of war, murder, hatred and greed will be ended like a bad dream. When Christ returns to this earth a peace treaty will be signed that can never be broken. Then the weary centuries of strife, suffering and dying are going to be forgotten. Peace, security, joy, happiness, prosperity and abundant health will be enjoyed by all the people on earth.

But this will only come about when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ. The cessation of war will be accomplished through the unification of the kingdoms of the world under the reign of Christ. Christ will put down rebellious man's slaughter of his fellows. **"He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire"** (Ps. 46:9).

Christ will cause all nations to beat their swords into plowshares and

their spears into pruning hooks. **"And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"** (Micah 4:3). There will be no more threats of war and annihilation. All nations will dwell together in complete safety. **"But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it"** (Micah 4:4).

Christ will establish His world headquarters at Jerusalem, the City of Peace. From Jerusalem He will rule all nations with a rod of iron. He **"will bless his people with peace"** (Ps. 29:11). He will teach the nations the way of peace and happiness. There will be a thousand years of peace on earth and good will among men. There will be universal disarmament! Then man's long-desired Utopian Age of peace and prosperity will be realized.

In the meantime, let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem, for when Jerusalem is at peace the world will be at peace (Ps. 122:6).



OOPS! We Goofed...

Editor's Note: In the last issue we had an article attributed to Bro. Rosco Brong. The article was taken from the book *The Complete Score of Rosco Brong's Short Sermons*. One of our readers called to let us know that the article was in fact selections from the book *The New Bible Pro and Con* by William C. Taylor. Upon searching, the editor found Bro. Brong's original reply on Bible translations. It is taken from the May 17th, 1963 issue of the *Ashland Avenue Baptist*. The article introduction is by the then current editor, Clarence Walker.

**BRO. BRONG EXPLAINS--
THE KING JAMES VERSION OR
TRANSLATION IS NOT THE
ORIGINAL SCRIPTURES
"MISTRANSLATIONS"**

Bro. Walker Says:

Several readers of the A.A.B. have written recently with regard to different translations of the Bible, among other things questioning some of Bro. Brong's "improved translations" in his printed sermons. Some people seem to think that the King James version is an infallibly inspired translation, although no Baptist scholar would make such a claim.

THE FOLLOWING LETTER BY BRO. BRONG, answering one of these letters from our readers, is self-explanatory:

Dear Bro. -----:

I have at hand your letter. . .and must confess that I am wholly unable to understand it. You say, "I cannot tolerate the mistranslation of the Bible," and I heartily agree with you in condemning mistranslation. But you do not point out a single mistranslation in the article referred to.

MANY TRANSLATIONS

You indicate that you believe in the King James version of the Bible, and I certainly agree with you that it is by far the best translation we have in any popular version. But as a loyal Southern Baptist you surely know that Southern Baptist Colleges, Seminaries, Sunday School lesson writers, and bookstores make much use of and highly recommend other translations. Also, you must know that eminent Southern Baptist scholars have made and helped to make many translations of the Bible far different from the King James Version.

Finally, you must know that the KING JAMES VERSION IS A TRANSLATION made over 350 years ago by Church of England (Episcopalian) bishops, not by Baptists. No translation of the Bible is infallibly inspired.

True Baptists believe in the verbal inspiration of the Hebrew and Greek scriptures as originally written, NOT of copies or translations.

ERRORS EXPOSED

I greatly appreciate your interest in my "improved translations." I assure you that I am as much opposed to mistranslations as you or anyone else can be. For example, when the King James version mistranslates Hebrew "sheol" and Greek "hades" by English

"grave" instead of "hell," Greek "pascha" by "Easter" instead of "Passover," Greek "ekkllesia" by "church" instead of "assembly," Greek "phthasomen" by "prevent" instead of "precede," etc. I STRONGLY OPPOSE SUCH MISTRANSLATIONS IN THE KING JAMES VERSION.

Being able to read the original Hebrew and Greek is a real blessing to a devout Bible believer and student, and I wish that every Christian could have time and opportunity to learn these languages and thus be able to read the real Bible without depending on translations. Christians who cannot read the original scriptures can be blessed by comparing different translations, but need to be on their guard against infidel or heretical so-called translators who prostitute their scholarship to the propagation of false doctrines.

INTERPRETATIONS

The proper test of any supposed translation is not whether it agrees with some other supposed translation, but whether it expresses a possible and probable meaning of the original language. Even within these limits, there is often room for varied interpretations. Any competent language scholar will confirm these statements.

Thank you for your expression of interest. If there is any specific question or difficulty on which I could help you, I shall be glad to hear from you further.

ROSCO BRONG



Forum #2

(Continued from page 31) ♦

my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished. Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice" (Ezra 9:1-4). The transgressors were not the ones that brought this serious matter of the defilement of the nation unto Ezra's attention. The trembling, fearful ones were! They are counterdistinguished by the contrast of **"those that had**

♦ (Continued on page 33)

Forum #1

(Continued from page 30) ♦

the 2nd Advent of Christ at the time of Armageddon, just prior to the millennial kingdom establishment.

The fatal flaw of preterism in any of its forms, is that it is categorically PostTrib. It does not allow for two advents (the rapture in the air and the 2nd advent touching down on the Mount of Olives). Revelation 14:14-20 mandates two reapings. And the writings of Paul are peppered with references of both "looking for Christ with blessed hope" and "coming with Christ in glory"- II Thessalonians 2:1 (Rapture) and 2:8 (Advent); I Thessalonians 5:9 (R); Colossians 3:4 (A), etc... Also compare Jude 14 and Revelation 19:8, 14, which has those that were gathered/raptured "coming back" with the King of Kings! Simply put, the Church Age saints are promised rapture salvation, but God still has yet to use the Great Tribulation to deal with Restored Israel (Jacob's trouble/Daniel's 70th Week).

The second possible dissertation of our text is that it is referring to the Apostle John. Coupled with John 21:22-23, "Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Some, like myself, believe John and Daniel are the "two witnesses" of Revelation 11. They are the only ones that are Biblically promised to stand in the latter days (Rev. 10:4, 11; 11:7, 15; Dan. 12:13) and they fit all the pictures fulfilled by the two witnesses. So some have conjectured over the years that John (at least) has still "not tasted" of death and will do so as a martyr at the mid-point of the Great Tribulation.

Thirdly, the text may find its fulfillment as a prophecy of the Lord that those present disciples would be eyewitnesses of the death, burial and resurrection of the "Son of man." When Christ finished the work of Calvary it was salvation and inevitable victory for the Kingdom of God. Satan has already lost, because Christ secured

the salvation of His people from their sins! **"After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost"** (John 19:28-30). I don't have a problem with this explanation of our text, as Christ inexorably claims His elect into His kingdom on a daily basis, as He prophesied He would to Pilate in John 19:37.

The last is probably the most viable of the four. It finds its immediate fulfillment in the next verses of the Bible- the transfiguration of Christ in Matthew 17:1-9, six days later. For "some" (the inner circle) to see Christ transformed before their eyes was physical evidence of the "Son of man" becoming the "Son of God!" They SAW it! Selah! Think about it! MATTHEW STEPP

Tom Ross
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South Point, OH 45680

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



Matthew 16:28 states: **"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."** It is important not to separate this verse from the verse before it and the verses after it (Matt. 16:27 and 17:1-9). Matthew 16:27 is a promise regarding the glory of Christ in relationship to the Second Coming when He shall come back to the earth to rule and reign in His millennial kingdom. Verse 28 is a promise to some of the disciples that were standing there, stating they would see the glory of Christ's kingdom before they died. Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up into a high mountain and was there transfigured before their eyes giving them a preview of His millennial glory (Matt. 17:1-9, cf. Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36). Christ thus gave the

inner circle disciples a glimpse of His regal majesty and splendor that will be fully manifested for all to see when He comes in His millennial glory. For the past 2000 years God's children have been partakers of the spiritual kingdom of Christ reigning in the hearts of His elect. How I long for the day when the literal manifestation of His Kingdom shall be established on the earth for 1000 years of unsurpassed spirituality, worship, and glory throughout all the earth! **"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...And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen"** (Psalm 72:7-8, 11, 19). During the 1000 year reign of Christ upon the earth we will see and experience fully what Peter, James, and John saw briefly and in part on the Mount of Transfiguration.

TOM ROSS



Forum #2

(Continued from page 33) ♦

been carried away" in this vile occupation. (You see, there is going to be a remnant left according to the election of grace as Paul later writes in Romans 11:5).

Now, I want us to see THREE groups here in Israel, as I believe these three groups still exist in America today (I Pet. 4:18). The first are the righteous- the godly ones that **"trembled at the words of the God."** They have come to Ezra in righteous fear and indignation describing the problem at hand (unclean marriages). But note the other two factions: the ungodly and the sinners. Obviously only some of the people have been involved in the sin of marrying a non-Israeli without making a cleansing sacrifice as demanded in Deuteronomy 21:11-13 and Numbers 31:19. They have brought in the woman and her traditions of gods! How terrible in the camp of a Holy God! These are the sinners, but just as dangerous are the ungodly majority of Israel (and

America) that TOLERATED this evil! They were not involved in the specific sin of (abortion/sodomy/gay marriage) uncleanness here, but they also were not doing anything about it! Did not stand for the Truth! Selah! Think about it!

Secondly, this same phrase is repeated in conjunction with the godly Ezra in chapter 10 verse 3, **"Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law."** So, this phrase captioning these "tremblers" is again speaking of the obedient remnant of righteously indignant Israelis/Christians! The counsel of Ezra (my lord) was the counsel **"of those that tremble at the commandment of our God!"**

I believe a descriptive passage of the thoughts of these humble, grace recipient (trembling) folk is in Ezra 9:13-15, **"And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this; Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldst not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping? O LORD God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this."** I like how Ezra sums up the circumstances in Ezra 9:8, **"And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage."** As God has granted that same little space of grace here in America, may we hold onto that strong nail in His Holy Place (the church, today!) and pray for the enlightenment and revival that only God can bring...! Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



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.

CHRISTIAN BROADCASTERS GROUP WARNS OF ONLINE CENSORSHIP

(WNS)--Craig Parshall, director of the John Milton Project for Free Speech at National Religious Broadcasters, a Christian association, said censorship of Christian messages is becoming more common on the Internet. The John Milton Project published a report in September detailing examples of censorship from new media companies like Facebook, Google, and Apple. The companies' policies allow them to remove user-generated content the companies deem offensive, Parshall says, including so-called "hate speech, or controversial political or religious content, even if it would be otherwise lawful."

AL-JAZEERA LAUNCHES AMERICAN CABLE NETWORK INCURSION

(WNS)--The Pan-Arab news channel Al-Jazeera will soon infiltrate the homes of almost 40 million Americans following its purchase Jan. 2 of Al Gore's left-leaning cable channel Current TV. Gore confirmed the sale, claiming in a statement Al-Jazeera shares Current TV's mission "to give voice to those who are not typically heard; to speak truth to power; to provide independent and diverse points of view; and to tell the stories that no one else is telling." Time Warner Cable Inc., the nation's second-largest TV operator, immediately dropped the station after the deal was confirmed. Al-Jazeera, owned by the government of Qatar, plans to transform Current TV into a network called Al-Jazeera America by hiring more journalists and adding five to 10 new U.S. bureaus, in addition to the five it has now.

COURT BLOCKS BAN ON GAY THERAPY FOR MINORS

(WNS)--A federal appeals court shortly before Christmas blocked a

California ban on "reparative therapy," giving concerned parents the right, for now, to seek counsel for a child with homosexual tendencies. The first-of-its-kind ban would have gone into effect yesterday, before a three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals issued an emergency order putting the law on hold until the court can hear full arguments on the measure's constitutionality. Liberty Counsel Founder and Chairman Mathew Staver, whose Christian legal aide group represents reparative therapy practitioners and recipients in a suit seeking to overturn the law, said, "Without this emergency injunction, the State of California would essentially barge into the private therapy rooms of victimized young people and tell them that their confusion caused by the likes of a Jerry Sandusky abuser is normal and they should pursue their unwanted same-sex sexual attractions and behavior."

AMERICANS VIEWS OF HOMOSEXUALITY AND SIN CHANGING

(WNS)--According to a survey from LifeWay Research and first reported by Religion News Service, 37 percent of Americans view homosexuality as a sin, down from 44 percent a year earlier. "The culture is clearly shifting on homosexuality and this creates a whole new issue: How will America deal with a minority view, strongly held by evangelicals, Catholics, Mormons, Muslims, and so many others?" said Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research. The number of Americans who do not believe homosexuality is a sin remained nearly the same, at 43 percent in September 2011 and 45 percent in November 2012. There was an increase in the percentage of those who said they were unsure of what they believe. Those who identify as "born-again, evangelical, or fundamentalist Christian" are the most likely to say that homosexual

behavior is a sin (73 percent). Conversely, those who never attend religious services are the most likely to say they do not believe homosexual behavior is a sin (71 percent).

VIRTUAL SCHOOLS POPULAR AMONG HOMESCHOOLERS

(WNS)--Online or "virtual" K-12 schools are drawing growing numbers. Many of them are public schools. Florida first pioneered the idea in 1996. Today, they boast more than 275,000 students. Many of these students are Christian homeschoolers who like – or who can at least tolerate – the curriculum of the public schools, but who want to keep their kids at home to prevent the other negative influences of public schools. Virtual schools employ state certified teachers and require up to 10 hours of online instruction from these teachers. The schools require another 20 or more hours of reading and independent class work.

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA TRACKS STUDENT SEXUAL ORIENTATION

(WNS)--The University of Iowa has apparently become the first public university in the nation to ask questions about a student's sexual orientation and gender identity in its admissions applications. The Baptist Press reports that the University of Iowa's application offers "transgender" as an option along with "male" and "female" and asks the optional question, "Do you identify with the LGBTQ Community?" Michael Barron, assistant provost for enrollment management and executive director of admissions, said, "The new LGBT question on our undergraduate application reflects our foundational commitment to inclusion of all students, no matter what their origin or orientation." The University of Iowa said it was also the first public university to offer insurance benefits to employees' domestic partners.

TEACHER SUSPENDED FOR GIVING BIBLE TO STUDENT

(WNS)--The Phillipsburg (N.J.) School District Board suspended a longtime middle school substitute teacher, Walter Tutka, of breaking two district policies -- handing out religious literature on campus and not being neutral when talking about religious

material – when he gave a student a Bible. CitizenLink says the incident started last September when a student came to school late. Tutka, who was standing by the door of the building, said, "The first shall be last, but the last shall be first." The student asked about the quote, and Tutka said it came from the Bible. Later, the student asked more questions about the quote. Tutka had his Bible with him, so he showed the student the verse. The student said he did not have a Bible, so Tutka gave him his. The board made its decision on Monday, but Tutka and the Christian law firm Liberty Institute are considering an appeal or other action so Tutka can keep his job.

STATES DELIVER 43 PRO-LIFE LAWS IN 2012

(WNS)--As the United States approaches *Roe v. Wade's* 40th anniversary, pro-life advocates have gained ground in restricting the number of abortions taking place every year. In 2012, 43 pro-life provisions went into effect in 19 states, the second highest number after states enacted 92 pro-life laws in 2011. The numbers come from a report published by pro-abortion group Guttmacher Institute, which calculated the number of pro-life provisions rather than bills or laws, since bills often have multiple provisions. "For those who have been in the pro-life trenches for years, the remarkable passage of so many pro-life pieces of legislation should give these faithful warriors much hope and encouragement," bioethics analyst Dawn McBane wrote on CitizenLink. Arizona led the number of pro-life laws, with seven, followed by Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wisconsin, which all enacted three or more laws.

STANFORD BRINGS ATHEIST INTO ITS OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

(WNS)--Although it may sound like a contradiction in terms, Stanford University has appointed an atheist "chaplain" to serve its non-believing students. Stanford's independent Humanist Community technically employs John Figdor, but he is an officially recognized chaplain under Stanford's Office of Religious Life. As reported by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the Harvard Divinity School graduate

♦ (Continued on page 36)

Bible & the Newspaper

(Continued from page 35) ♦

Figdor explains his work by saying that “atheist, agnostic and humanist students suffer the same problems as religious students—deaths or illnesses in the family, questions about the meaning of life, etc.—and would like a sympathetic nontheist to talk to.” Scotty McLennan, the dean for religious life at Stanford, who is a Unitarian Universalist minister and the author of books including *Jesus Was a Liberal*, eagerly welcomed Figdor as a campus chaplain, saying that the hire made sense because Stanford itself had been founded on inclusive principles.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS SABBATH SUSPENSION

(WNS)--A court ruling in Britain said Christians can't refuse work on Sunday because remembering the Sabbath is not a “core component” of Christian teaching. The judgment came on an appeal brought by a Christian woman who said her employer forced her to resign because she refused to work on Sunday. Celestina Mba said she loved her job, and she had even found other workers willing to take her shifts. But that didn't matter to her employer or the court. The case is causing consternation in religious circles in England because it essentially means the courts are now in a position of deciding what doctrines are “core” and which doctrines are not.

NEW ZEALAND AWAKES TO MARRIAGE ISSUE

(WNS)--Family First NZ and the “Protect Marriage” campaign said support for traditional marriage in the notoriously liberal New Zealand is growing. A *Herald on Sunday* poll said support for same-sex “marriage” has fallen from a previous high of 63 percent last May to just 53 percent now. “These results are energising our campaign to maintain the definition of marriage as is,” says Bob McCoskrie, National Director of Family First NZ. “We always knew that once we got past the slogan of ‘marriage equality’ and debated the real impact of redefining marriage, that New Zealanders would understand that there is no need for a ‘same-sex marriage’ bill.”

CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP STOPS MASS FOR GAYS

(WNS)--The leader of Catholics in

England and Wales, Archbishop Vincent Nichols, has ordered a church in central London to stop providing special masses for openly gay congregants. The so-called “Soho Masses” were set up six years ago by a group of openly gay Catholics and sympathetic priests. The decision is a significant win for conservatives in the Catholic Church. Archbishop Nichols' order comes at a time when the Catholic Church is standing strong for traditional marriage following moves in Britain and France to allow gay men and women to marry. Shortly before Christmas the Pope used two speeches to take a strong stand for traditional morality. The speeches came as the U.K., the United States, and other countries consider legislation that would legalize so-called “same sex marriage.”

OPEN DOORS INTERNATIONAL'S RELEASES ANNUAL WORLD WATCH LIST

(WNS)--For the 11th straight year, Christians in North Korea suffered the most persecution in the world, according to 2012 rankings released Jan. 8 by

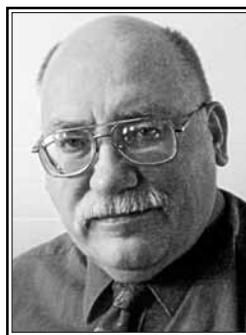
Open Doors International, a U.S.-based group that keeps track of worldwide persecution of believers. Its annual World Watch List revealed persecution is on the rise worldwide, especially in Arab Spring countries and areas around the Sahel belt of Africa. The reporting period ended in October, so rankings do not include violence sparked by Egypt's new constitution. The African country of Mali presented the biggest surprise of the list, jumping from unranked last year to No. 7—one of 11 countries where Open Doors reports “extreme persecution.” Islamic extremism accounts for the deteriorating conditions after Sharia law was instituted last year in the northern part of the country. China, ranked in the top 10 five years ago, represented the most significant improved country in the rankings, dropping from No. 21 to No. 37. The fall is due primarily to intensifying persecution elsewhere, but conditions are also improving for Christians in the world's most populous country.



Joab's Declaration

By Medford Caudill
(1949 - 2012)

“Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the LORD do that which seemeth him good” (II Sam. 10:12).



We are not given a lot of details about Joab. He was not a particularly moral or religious person. It was Joab who withdrew that Uriah might die without questioning David's orders. It was Joab who later killed Absalom directly against the orders of David to let him live. It was Joab who after protest numbered the children of Israel. It was Joab who was a helper to and follower of Adonijah.

David instructed Solomon concerning Joab: “Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did

to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet. Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace” (I Kings 2:5-6). Solomon had Benaiah slay Joab by the altar.

This statement of Joab's in the heat of battle surely is a great declaration of truth. Yet we ought to remember that men often fall back on religion in times of danger. We do not know what Joab's heart was like at this time. We do know that many think not of God until they are in danger.

Seldom do they learn their lesson. The children of Israel in the time of the Judges are a good example. They would constantly forsake the Lord and follow after Baal and Ashtaroth. “Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken

unto their judges, but they went a-whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so” (Judg. 2:16-17).

Sometimes the Lord does use hard times and great troubles to turn His people from their wandering ways. Many times though promises made in hardship are forgotten when times become good.

This statement of Joab's clearly illustrates man's responsibility and God's sovereignty. Joab said: “Let us play the men.” Man is a responsible creature. The Bible does not teach fatalism. Hardshellism is a great heresy. We are to actively fulfill God's commands. We are to play the man.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Jesus said to go and we are to go. We are responsible to preach and to witness. We are responsible to fight the good fight of faith. Joab and the children of Israel went forth into the battle with all of the courage they could muster. They went forth to work with all their might for the victory of the army. We must do the same. We must use every weapon at our disposal. We must preach, pray, and study the Scriptures.

We make a great mistake if in doing that we think the outcome of the battle is in our hands. Joab concludes his declaration by saying, “The Lord do that which seemeth him good.” We ought to play the men, but we ought also to remember that God is sovereign over all. “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand” (Isa. 14:24).

God is in absolute control of all things. The outcome of the battle is in His hands. We may lay our plans. We may plot our strategy. We may think we are all important. The simple fact of the matter is that God controls all.

As the Lord's servants let us play the men. Let us do all that God has commanded. But, let us never forget, God works all things in His way, in His time. We are the servants, while He is the master.



CELLBLOCK TO CELLBLOCK

By David G. Hoffman

Encouragement and thoughts from a prisoner to other prisoners and readers.

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried" (Rev. 2:10).



Depression Hurts

Greetings, grace, and peace to you, dear reader. It has been a very long time since I have written a column, and I hope after you read this one you will understand the hiatus.

A lot of things have happened since last I wrote: I completed my Associate of General Liberal Arts degree, I have been transferred to a different unit, I have completed an Advanced Culinary Arts class, enrolled in a culinary arts degree program, been repeatedly turned down for parole, and went one-on-one with depression.

"And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. but when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt" (Matt. 14:25-31)?

"Wherefore didst thou doubt" indeed...

I have been a believer for over a decade now, all of those years behind bars. And I have enjoyed the grace of God right here behind the concretina topped chainlink fences, steel bars and concrete walls. In fact, my cup of blessings so overfloweth that it floods the floor of my cubicle and runs down the walkway. So it came with a tremendous shock that something could so overtake my life that it blocked out my perception of God's

grace and sovereignty.

But it did.

I am serving a 25 year aggravated sentence and had to serve 12 and a half years just to "come up" for a parole review. The first review was in 2009, and I was promptly 'set-off' ---which I expected. All aggravated sentences are set-off for first come up.

I was given a one year set-off, which led me to believe I would be given parole the next time I came up, because I was eligible for up to a five year set-off. The one year set-off looked like good news. So good in fact, that I went to dreaming about what I wanted to do when I got out. My mentors and dear friends went to planning for my release to make my transition from prison to free-world as smooth as possible.

Then I came up in 2010, and was set-off again.

At that moment something hit me from the blindside with such force and intensity it took me six months to figure out what it was. It so engulfed my life I was not living, I was merely going through the motions. Like Peter, I had taken my eyes off the Lord and concentrated on the storm and was sucked into a hurricane of DEPRESSION.

Depression hurts.

I was so debilitated by the depression it was another year before I could whisper, "Lord, save me from this storm." During that year I came up and was set-off a third time. However, by that time the Lord had given me a new outlook and reminded me that He is still on the Throne, and still my All-in-all whether I am sitting behind these bars or walking the streets.

Around the time the Lord pulled me from the depths of depression I came across the Latin phrase, "Carpe Diem." Some people translate this as 'seize the day,' but the literal translation is 'enjoy today, do not worry about tomorrow'---which equates nicely with Matthew 6:34, **"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the**

morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

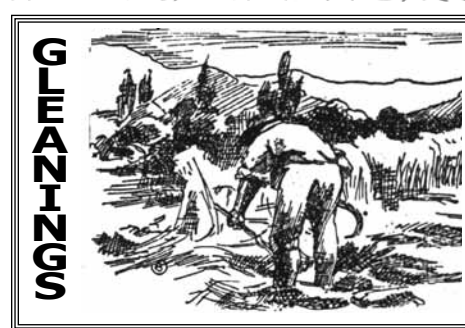
I have Carpe Diem inked onto my triceps to remind me to take each day as it comes and not let thoughts of tomorrow take my mind off the One Who provides today.

I am waiting for my fourth parole review right now. If it is a release decision, then I am ready to begin my life on the other side of the fence. However, if it is not, then I will continue my quest for a degree in culinary arts. The one thing I will not be is depressed.

Depression hurts, but the Balm of Gilead heals.

Until next time, dear reader, may the grace of our God in Heaven keep you...

Note: I would like to give a shout out and thank you to Bro. Harold McSwain in Mansfield, Louisiana who said he missed my articles in the *Banner* and wanted to know what happened. It was the nudge I needed to get back to it. I hope I have answered your question.



Where Was God?

By Chad Johnson
of Auburn, Kentucky

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence" (Ps. 139:7)?

A few weeks ago our nation was shocked by the news of the mass murders that took place at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT. The first thing many asked was "Where was God?" Our text verse leads into verses that tell us that God is everywhere. There is no where that the presence of God is not present. In Psalm 139:13 we see that God possesses our reins. This shows us that God is in complete and total control of all His creation. The one

who holds the reins is in control of the horse. Some like to soften the blow of things God does by saying He allowed it to happen.

From the human stand point we could look through the Bible and say that God is cruel and unfair. God did many terrible things to judge His nation Israel. God also told Israel in many of their wars to destroy men, women, children, animals, etc. Humanly speaking we would say this is wrong. In Romans 9:15-24 we see that we are the creation and who are we to challenge God for what He does?

So where was God? He was right there in Newtown, CT. Now from my human side, I was heart broken for the victims and their families. I, however, did not say, "Where is God?" I know that He works all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:1).

I have often wondered why so many shootings take place in schools and colleges. I truly believe the reason is that God's name (not God) has been removed from these places. The public school system said in the 1960s that God's Word was no longer to be read. Prayer was against the law. Evolution was taught as a fact and creation as a theory, if it was taught at all. We can now teach that gay marriage, abortion, and premarital sex are okay. Ungodly groups that fight against any mention of God would have had no problem with the teacher leading their students in prayer on that day.

Our government and the biased media want to remove God from public view. Many want "one nation under God" taken out of the pledge, "In God we trust" off our money, and Scriptures taken off federal buildings. Our founding fathers meant for separation of Church and State to keep government out of the Church, not the Church out of the government.

We now have metal detectors and nurseries in our schools to protect against guns and to give teen mothers a government tax payer provided baby sitter. We can see that a nation who forgets God will be turned into Hell. **"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Ps. 9:17).**

The liberals will never remove God from society, but God can remove His hand of blessing and show us what a Godless nation can be.



GLEANINGS



Watchfulness

Perhaps there is nothing more important to the Christian, than the abomination **“Watch and pray.”** For, without watchfulness and prayer, men will sin, will fall into temptations, and do many things to bring odium upon the Christian name. The importance and power of prayer, is, probably, more generally understood, than the subject of watchfulness. What can a Christian accomplish, without this excellent grace? What can he not accomplish, with it? Without it, how feeble and impotent are his intended good deeds? and, alas! how many of his actions prove as the seed sown by the way-side.

Jesus Christ repeatedly enjoined on His disciples the great importance

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of watchfulness. See Matthew 24:42; Matt. 25:13; Mark 13:33, etc.

Paul exhorts the Corinthian Christians to **“watch ye, stand fast in the faith.”** He tells the Thessalonians to **“watch and be sober;”** and in one of his addresses to Timothy, he advises him to **“watch thou in all things.”**

John, in his message to the church in Sardis, is commanded to write to them to WATCH, or else the Lord “would come upon them as a thief, and they should not know the hour of his coming.”

David, in the 37th Psalm, says that the **“wicked watcheth the righteous,”** and, as a sequence, it follows that the righteous should be ever watchful, in order that they may teach a perverse and wicked world the truth of the

are indeed cheering and soul-animating to every follower of the Savior. In John’s vision, it is said, **“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth,”** etc. In the parable of the unfaithful steward, Christ pronounces a blessing on those servants whom the **“Lord when he cometh shall find watching.”** It may be a great blessing to watch, for, we frequently have opportunities of doing good, which, if not on our guard, may pass forever. Such occasions, misimproved, are sins of omission. Through watchfulness and prayer, we may be **“accounted worthy. . .to stand before the Son of man,”** in the day of final account.

(The Baptist, Sept. 7, 1844)

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GLEANINGS



Editing A Newspaper

Editing a newspaper is no easy task. Many persons estimate the ability of a newspaper, and the industry and talent of its editor, by the variety and quantity of the editorial matter it contains. Nothing can be more fallacious (misleading). It is comparatively an easy task for a practiced writer to pour out weekly columns of words upon any and all subjects, his ideas may flow freely, and his command of language may enable him to string them together like a bunch of onions, and yet his paper may be a meager, poor concern. But a judicious, well informed editor, who exercises his avocation with a full conviction and conscientiousness of the responsible duty he has to perform, will conduct his paper with the same care and assiduity that a lawyer bestows on his suit, or a humane physician on a patient. Indeed the writing part of editing a newspaper is but a small portion of the work. The industry even, is not shown here. Then care, the taste, the time employed in selecting, are far more important; for the fact of a good editor is shown more by his selections, his judicious arrangement in the compilation of the matter that is to fill his sheet, than any thing else; certainly more than by long, windy editorials. The tone, temper, manner, spirit, manliness, courtesy, propriety, consistency, comprehensiveness as well as conciseness, should be among the criterions by which to judge of a newspaper. To preserve all these as they should be preserved, is enough to occupy the attention of any man. But if any one is still incredulous (skeptical)--why, we can't help it, that's all!

(The Baptist, Nov. 1, 1845)



ANNOUNCEMENTS

On December 15, 2012 Elder Medford Caudill went home to be with the Lord. He had preached for forty years and was pastor of the New Testament Baptist Church of Goshen, Indiana for twenty-nine years. Please remember Sister Myrtis and the family in your prayers.

"...and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty" (I Sam. 20:18).

The Citrus Missionary Baptist Church of Inverness, Florida and pastor Wm. Troy Sheppard would like to announce their 2013 Bible Conference scheduled for February 15th thru 17th.

Service times are Friday at 6:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday at 10:00 a.m. Meals will be provided by the church.

Speakers are Elders Eddie Bowen, George Sledd, Tom Horn, Doug Newell, Lewis Kiger, Sam Wilson, Leroy Pack, Justin Meier and Andy Wilson.

For more information contact Pastor Sheppard at (352) 464-1636

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.

The Amazing Grace Baptist Church of Stockdale, Texas is in need of a pastor. The church believes in preaching and teaching the doctrines of grace and the Lord's church. Any interested brother my contact Bro. Charles Reddin at (830) 401-0310, if there is no answer please leave a message.

The Landmark Baptist Church of Collinsville, IL is in need of a pastor. Any interested Elders may call (618) 288-4236 for more information.

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 Liverpool Independent Baptist Church of Liverpool, New York (north of Syracuse) is searching for a sovereign grace pastor. The church believes in the doctrines of grace, the local church, and is pre-trib and pre-mil. Interested brethren should contact Bro. Greg Sigworth at (315) 677-3819.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Galena, OH is in need of a pastor. Any interested candidates possessing the qualifications and traits concerning the office as found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are asked to contact either of the following: Bro. Randy Coffey at (614) 871-2406 or email reccoffey@aol.com, or Bro. Joe Vass at (614) 846-8699 or email jamijoe@wowway.com.

The Glade Creek Baptist Church, Summersville, WV, is in need of a pastor. This church believes and preaches the doctrines of grace and church truth. Any interested Elder should call Bro. Rodney Perkins at (304) 742-3050 or Bro. Allen Frame at (304) 742-5775.

The Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Marion, IL is in need of a replacement pastor. Elder Raymond T. Ellis is the current pastor, but due to his age, is needing to resign. The church believes and preaches the doctrines of grace and the local church. Any interested Elder may contact Elder Ellis at (618) 983-8697 or Bro. Gary Ratley at (618) 841-0228.

The Twinbrook Hills Baptist Church of Hamilton, OH is prayerfully seeking a pastor. Organized in 1938, the church holds to historic Baptist truths, including the Doctrines of Grace. Please visit the church's website at <http://twinbrook.net> to view the Church Constitution and other items that describe our beliefs and show what the church is doing today. Please contact Bro. Chris Willis at Elohimfirst@gmail.com or more information.



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 12-1-2012 to 12-31-2012

Beginning Balance\$6,386.51

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS325.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY 100.00
..... 525.00
TOTAL 6,911.51

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time 360.00
Tape Production 195.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$555.00
..... \$6,356.51
Less Corbin, KY des. -1,523.72
..... 4,832.79
Interest + .05
ENDING BALANCE \$4,832.84

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance\$1,683.72

RECEIPTS:

TOTAL 1,843.72

EXPENDITURES:

WCTT 160.00
..... 1,523.72
Interest + .05
ENDING BALANCE \$1,523.77

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 12-1-2012 to 12-31-2012

Beginning Balance\$1,597.56

RECEIPTS:

Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX 50.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL 50.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL 60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX 50.00
Bible Believer's B. C., Naples, ID 100.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV 313.45
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY 150.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL 25.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR 12.50
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC 50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL 50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK 35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV 100.00
Landmark M. B. C. Moncks Corner, SC 75.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM 100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC 50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY 20.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH 100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN 50.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL 100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR 50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS 25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL 100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX 30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Warren, OH 50.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA 25.00
Subscriptions 58.00
Anonymous 2,200.00
Dividing checks 150.00
Sub Total \$4,653.95
TOTAL \$6,251.51

EXPENDITURES:

Printing 535.00
Postage 600.82
Wages 2,300.00
FICA 175.96
Dividing checks 150.00
PO Box rent 76.00
Total Expenditures \$3,837.78
Bank Charge -13.00
ENDING BALANCE \$2,400.73

Announcement - Cowboy Bob Will Not Be Here

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

Cowboy Bob, his wonder horse Big'un and the West Texas All Female Jew's Harp Band will not be appearing this Sunday, or any Sunday at our church. Neither will the Karate Kid, nor the Hoosier Hotshots nor the New York Philharmonic. And we want to tell you that His Holiness the Right Reverend Evangelist I. Foxum, apostle and miracle worker extraordinaire, and his soloist I. Swoonum will not be here either. We are sorry for you if any of this is a disappointment to you.



The reason for these cancellations is that we have been reading our Bibles! We have come to understand that it is God that does the saving of sinners, not "evangelistic gimmicks" or religious-flavored entertainment. We learned that the apostles and other New Testament preachers did not use hoopla, gimmicks, entertainers, ex-prize fighters, contests or other such carnal means in either their evangelism or their worship – and they were tremendous successes at pleasing God! We want to please God! So we are going to do things the Bible way. We aim to be a New Testament kind of Baptist Church. We found out that it was this kind of church that Jesus built while He was on earth – not a three ring circus kind of Sunday crowd. There are plenty of church-circuses around if it is a religious-flavored show that you want to see. Please do not be too upset with us for not providing entertainment for you and your family. Whatever your taste in religious music, church sports, emotional manipulations by preachers and gospel shindigs you can be sure to find it in our community or in the countryside 'round about us.

Reading our Bibles has convinced us that we ought not to "join up" with

the liberals or with compromisers. We want nothing to do with the ecumenical movement, man-made denominations, conventions, associations, or so-called fellowships and we are determined to stay away from para-church organizations which are also not authorized by the Bible. New Testament congregations did not "join up" and we do not think we ought to either. We are quite content to enjoy fellowship with other believers – especially like-minded individuals – as well as with other churches of like precious faith and practice. And we especially enjoy fellowship with God and can do so with a clear conscience in this matter because we are following the example given in the New Testament.

Because of what God has done to us in the new birth and because of what the Bible says, we are going to be content with meeting to simply worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24), to pray together, to sing scriptural songs and to hear God's Word taught and preached. If in your "inner man" you are interested in such simple God-honoring, Christ-glorifying obedience to Bible precepts and examples, you are welcome to attend our meetings. If you are without Christ we welcome you to come and hear the gospel. Lost person, we promise that you will not be pressured or embarrassed by an unscriptural "invitation." Nobody will try to get you to "walk the aisle" or "make a decision for Christ." If you are yet lost in your sins, we urge you even now to repent of them and trust in Christ. Please understand that this is a spiritual matter between you and God alone. Please understand

that doing something physically is not what God requires. Paul made it clear that he preached "...repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" to both Jews and non-Jews (Acts 20:21). We say unto you what Jesus said, "...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).



Preacher Shortage

By Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 – 2002)

"We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long" (Ps. 74:9).

These were dark days in the history of Judah. Prophecy was suspended. No inspiring psalm was being sung. No consoling promise could be heard. No prophetic word of comfort of a better day was heard in the land. The nation was cursed of God by having its prophets taken away.

Is our day any better? I think not. It is ill with the people of God because there are few true preachers of the Word left in the world today. There is a famine of hearing the Word of the Lord. God-sent pastors are as needful to our churches today as they ever were, and, sad to say, they are in a very small supply.



Every week I hear from an independent Baptist Church who is in need of a faithful pastor some place in America. It is most evident to the editor that we have more churches than men who are capable of pastoring them. Are we under the curse of God as a people like Judah was in the days of the captivity? Why are so few young preachers being called within our ranks?

It seems to me this problem has been brought on by a number of things. First, the small number of young men being called into the ministry. Second, the number of young men who either quit the ministry or join some other religious group. Third, poor treatment of pastors by our churches. All too often our churches allow other churches to interfere into things which they should not. Or, worse still, they think the pastor is literally the slave of the church or some well-to-do family.

I predict that if the present trend continues for the next few years there will be a host of our churches who can not find men whose hearts and tongues are touched with the celestial fire. Due to the shortage, they will call unsound men from other groups. The result of this will be the destruction of the faith that we all now count most precious. Ten years from now those who remember this article will know whether the writer of this article was a wise man or a fool.

In the main our people do not seem to be aware of the growing problem. We constantly point out the errors of other Baptist groups, but we seldom look honestly and soberly at ourselves. Brethren, it is time to wake up and pray that our sovereign Lord will send forth some pastors who believe the truth to serve our churches in the next generation.

My heart goes out to those churches who are destitute of a faithful pastor. I pray that God will send them one who believes the truth, for it is a terrible curse for a church to continue a long time without an undershepherd. However, it is better for churches to be slow in calling a pastor than for them to act quickly and live to regret it.

(The Berea Baptist Banner, 1/5/1982).



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