

# The Berea Baptist Banner

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

## The God of the Living and the Dead

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia



My text verse is found in the book of Romans. **"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living"** (Rom. 14:7-9). Actually, my text verse originally, for this article, was the passage that I will use in the first point, in which the Lord declares to the Sadducees that He is the **"God of the living."** However, I wanted to make plain, at the beginning of the article, that our God is Ruler and King over all. All men everywhere and in every place and time, owe their existence unto God, and owe their obedience and worship unto Him. Further, whether there is life, and whether there is death, our God is still Lord and Master. If you read our text passage again, I believe that you will notice that in a very real sense, the Apostle

Paul is making it known to his readers, that those who are the children of God, are given unto God both in this life, and in the life to come. In some ways, we might even say that death itself, and the powers of the grave, are made of no consequence to those who are the sons and daughters of God. He is our God while we are alive in this flesh; He is our God after our soul and spirit leaves this flesh to rot in the grave. He is our God in this mortal realm; He is our God in the spiritual realm. He is our God before we are saved (though we are ignorant of Him in a saving way); He is our God after the Holy Spirit quickens us, and brings us to life spiritually.

As we proceed, I want us to break down these observations into two main points: First, God is the God of the living; Second, God is the God of the dead. We must not and dare not limit Him or His powers! We must not and dare not confine the space or the

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## Four Points about Moses

By Christopher W. Burke, Sr.  
of Catlettsburg, Kentucky



Our message consists of four points about the man Moses, which I hope will both honor our subject as well as be a blessing to God's people. These points include the following: The Faith of Moses; the Faithfulness of Moses; the Failures of Moses; and the Fate of Moses.

### 1. FIRST, WE WANT TO CONSIDER THE FAITH OF MOSES

**"By faith Moses, when he was**

**born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to**

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## Church Government

By Nathaniel Hille  
of Plant City, Florida



**"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell"** (Col. 1:15-19).

There are many ways in which people and churches (true and false) do things. However, our concern, as always, must be **"What saith the scripture..."** (Rom. 4:3)? What does God say in His Word how the church is to be governed? Do the Scriptures teach a government of popery? How about Episcopal? What of a government of Presbytery? How about a deacon run church? Again, we must ask ourselves, **"What saith the scripture..."** (Rom. 4:3)? The phrase **"The Bible is our sole rule of**

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The purpose of the *Berea Baptist Banner* is as follows:

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



By the Editor

### "AS A HEN"

As many of you know I try and raise a few chickens as a hobby. I did not seem to inherit my father's green thumb, but I did manage to receive the cockerell gene that has been past down by my forefathers from way back yonder in England.

Raising farm animals is something that "every" kid needs to experience growing up. Many of life's lessons can be seen, tried and proved in the barnyard. Many Bible truths can be gleaned from the actions of farm animals.

I as well as many others have seen the following scenario many times. If a strange dog or cat or other animal like a possum or raccoon and even hawks will try to get a chick, mom will cackle and they all come running to her protection under her wings. I have seen the hen even go after the predator. A mother hen will fight beak and claw to protect her young.

On occasion you encounter a farm animal that breaks the usual mold, but as stated before there is always a lesson to be seen and learned. Last year there was a hen, like the rest, would come in and lay her egg in the nest. As usual the eggs would latter be collected. Sometimes you will get a broody hen that decides it is time to hatch a clutch of young'uns and doesn't want you to take the eggs. She will squawk and occasionally peck at your hand as you remove the eggs from under her. But this one hen was a lot more determined to protect her eggs than the usual hen. While I was trying to remove the eggs she was sitting on, she was

squawking louder than a rooster crowing, with feathers all ruffled up like a porcupine. Pecking my hand removing skin with blood flowing. She was saying these are my eggs and you ain't making breakfast out of my kids. If this hen could talk I am sure she was giving me what for in no uncertain terms. Well, like I said she broke the mold. After losing all her eggs to this big fat hungry man she was determined the fight was far from over. Out of the nest she comes squawking so loud the other hens as well as the roosters was running for their lives. She was flogging me, pecking at my legs, jumping up and down. She was determined to get her eggs back. I wasn't sure if this was a hen or a crazed rabid chicken, and had sudden thoughts that maybe it was time for this hen to make dumplings.

After I managed to get out of the pen with the eggs and only missing a small portion of skin and several drops of blood the following verse came to mind, "...how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, ..." (Luke 13:34). In this passage we see our Lord speaking and using the illustration of a hen gathering and protecting her little chicks from harm by spreading her wings to cover them.

Well this hen was a perfect example of Scripture. She was willing to protect her young from harm (notice her "unborn" unlike many people today). She was willing to take on someone many times her size with no thought for herself, only of her young. Oh, how much more so is our Saviour willing to protect the ones He loves!



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# God of the Living

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time or the conditions of His reign! But, most of all, I want us to take to heart – after careful consideration – what the deity of God means to you and me. If you are unsaved, then you must consider that the God Who made you requires your obedience and worship. Though you are dead spiritually, He is your God. When you die physically, He will judge you. With these thoughts in mind, you must turn to Him, repent of your sins, and cry out for Him to work the work of life and living in your own existence. To grant unto you eternal life, and salvation from the wrath to come.

If you are saved, then you must consider that God is your God – even now you have been granted eternal, spiritual life. You owe Him your service and love in this life. You owe Him your deepest gratitude for the fact that death has been conquered on your behalf. You have a great hope and comfort delivered unto you – your sins are paid for, and the justice of God has been answered. Your spirit and soul are the Lord's, and death cannot prevent Him from taking you unto Him. In the end, even the grave will give forth your mortal body, and it will be transformed into a spiritual body, and in it you will forever serve God. Praise the Lord!

## THE GOD OF THE LIVING

In my first point, I want us to notice how our God is the God of the living. We read in Mark 12:24-27, **“And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels**

**which are in heaven. And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.”**

The main point that the Lord Jesus is addressing here in this lesson to the Sadducees, is that there is a resurrection, and there is a life after this mortal life. He is stressing here, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must be still alive in some way. Because, our God speaks in a present tense when He says, **“...I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob...”** He did not say, “I was the God of Abraham...” But, rather, He said **“I AM the God of Abraham...”** (emph. PS). So, just as the Sadducees and the other Jews were forced to admit, we must, also, acknowledge that our God is presently God, He is the God of all that live, and those who serve and love Him are even now alive. I believe the teaching of the Lord Jesus to the Sadducees has bearing not just on the person of God, but also on the condition and persons of men, and upon our present and future conditions.

Let us make some few observations about how God is the God of the living.

*He is God over all that live in the flesh.* All that have the breath of life in them, owe that life to the God of all Living. Paul explained this to the Athenians in Acts 17:24-29, **“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and**

**breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.”** Wherever there are men that have the breath of life, they owe that life unto God. (See also Job 33:4; Job 34:14-15; Job 12:10; Isaiah 42:5.) In this sense, though all men will not knowingly and purposely allow it, He is their God. He is Life. He is the giver of life. He is the sustainer of life. If He were to leave us, or even if He were to leave the entire universe, life, itself, would cease to exist.

*He is God over all those that live in Christ in the flesh.* In the beginning of the Gospel of John, the Lord Jesus Christ is described this way: **“In him was life; and the life was the light of men...But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”** (John 1:4, 12-13.) The Lord Jesus Christ speaks to the Father in Heaven, and He says this of Himself: **“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him”** (John 17:2). The Lord Jesus Christ is the life of all of those that trust in Him. This life

is not from the earth, nor did we inherit it from our parents. This life which comes from the Lord, is eternal life. This eternal life is ours from the moment that the Lord Jesus Christ comes unto us, and delivers us from the bondage of sin, and into the glorious life of Jesus Christ.

We read also these words that the Apostle Paul had for the Romans: **“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness”** (Rom. 8:10). We must most certainly say, that, even in this body of flesh, whatever life in the spirit we have as the children of God, is a result of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who has given us that spiritual life.

*He is God over the spirits of those children of God that have departed this life.* When one is saved by the grace of God, and when one owns the Lord as his God; that bond, and that connection is not severed by the death of the mortal body. Remember, one of the observations that we noticed in the previous point made clear that what we have is an eternal life in the spirit of God. So, it would be illogical and unscriptural to imagine that our God in this life would cease to be our God when we enter into the life that must exist after the death of this mortal life.

Maybe one of the best examples of this is found on the mount of transfiguration. There we read about two men, who had already departed this life, that came and owned the Lord Jesus as their God, even though they were no longer alive after the flesh. We read in Luke. 9:29-32, **“And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with him**

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**two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.**" These men, though they were no longer in the flesh, still gathered with the Lord Jesus Christ, and beheld His glory. They spoke of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem; and I think they understood that they were speaking about the fulfillment of their own salvation!

You see, whether in this life, or in the next, still, our God is our God, and our Saviour is our Saviour! All of this goes back to what we discussed at the beginning of this message that God is the God of the living. In the time of Abraham, God was his God. In the time of the Lord Jesus' earthly ministry, God was still Abraham's God. Today, while you and I are discussing these things, God is, even now, Abraham's God.

*He is the living God!* (*The God of those that have life.*) So many times in the Bible, our God is called the "Living God." In fact, I did a word search, and the Lord God is called the "Living God" approximately 30 times. Two of the most famous instances are the words of the Apostle Peter in Matthew 16:16 and John 6:69. In both cases, Peter calls Jesus the **"..Christ, the Son of the living God."** I think there is a lot tied up in this title that God takes for Himself. It is not just that He is the living God; but it is also that He is the God of all of those who have life. He is the God that lives! And all of those that would live will worship Him

as the God that lives. He is the God of all life, and the God of all of those that are alive. Hezekiah cried out unto the Lord, **"For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth"** (Isa. 38:18-19). Of course, Hezekiah is speaking of praising God before men, and this can only be done in this life. We know, that even after death, God will be our God – in fact, we have already made this observation in this article. But, what I want us to notice from the words of King Hezekiah, is the fact that life itself is associated in an inseparable way with the Lord God of hosts. Only those that live (in the Lord God) can truly praise Him. Only those that live (in this flesh) can exalt His name before men. Let us never forget this opportunity and privilege that we have. King Hezekiah took it for granted, and he was struck down with a sickness that would have taken his life, if God had not intervened. Let us pray that we can learn from King Hezekiah, so we can serve Him in this life with an awareness that our opportunity to serve Him before the world of men, will expire when our fleshly bodies are committed unto the grave.

Let me close this first point with this thought (which we will discuss more fully in the next point): One day, even these mortal bodies we currently live in, will be given life from above. We read in Romans 8:11-14, **"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore,**

**brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."** You see, the living God has such an effect upon us, that even our mortal bodies are affected. What a wonderful salvation the Lord God has delivered unto us, that even our mortal bodies will be quickened and made alive. Wherever the grace of God goes, surely, life from on High will follow Him!

## THE GOD OF THE DEAD

The verse we read at the beginning of our first point told us, **"He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err"** (Mark 12:27). It might seem, at first, that this verse is totally contradicting this second point which I want to make – which is that our God is the God of the dead. In fact, this verse we have just read, tells us plainly, that God is not the God of the dead. However, I believe we need to compare Scripture with Scripture, in order that we might determine what it is the Lord Jesus is referring to when He makes the statement that God is not the God of the dead. But first, let us read some verses that will make my second point more clear.

We read in I Corinthians 15:16-20, **"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."** The verse that jumps out to me in

this passage, is verse 18. **"Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."** Notice, in particular, the phrase **"..fallen asleep in Christ..."** I suppose we would have to admit that the Lord Jesus Christ is the God of the dead, in that He is the God of those that have **"fallen asleep in Christ."** This is a thought we like to consider when we lose a loved one – which is that their bodies are only fallen asleep in Christ. Well, in this case, we must say that Christ is the God of the dead.

Maybe, the way I can best describe this point I am trying to get across is this way: Our God is worshipped by the living. In other words, the dead do not worship Him, so He is not the God of the dead in that sense. This is what the Lord Jesus is saying in our first text verse (Mark 12:27). God is worshipped by those that are living – most particularly by those that are given eternal life by Jesus Christ – such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and even Moses. However, we can also safely (and scripturally) say, that God is also the God of the dead. When I say this, I am not contradicting our text verse, because I am not saying that He is worshipped by the dead. In fact, the Lord Jesus Christ told Nicodemus, **"..Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"** (John 3:3, 5). So, it is clear that only the living will worship God – whether in this life or the next. However, as I was saying, and as I Corinthians 15 clearly demonstrates, those that are the Lord's are His even in death. There can only be life in the worshippers of the Lord

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God. However, the grave, and the death that have taken the mortal bodies of the saints of God, is not yet removed – it is only prevented by the will and purposes of God; but soon, the appointed time will come, wherein the grave will spew forth the bodies of those who are the Lord's in truth and life.

Let us go on to make a few observations concerning the godship of God, even over death.

*He is God even over those that are spiritually dead.* When we consider the phrase, “The God of the dead,” one of the first thoughts that ought to cross our minds is the fact that even the dead should acknowledge that God is God. Though in this life they will not acknowledge His deity, still, in the eyes of God, He is the God of all. We read in Daniel 5:22-23, **“And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.”** Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, did not acknowledge God (as Nebuchadnezzar had done), but yet, God was still his God in the sense that God had all power over him, even power over the breath of life. This is true in the lives of all men.

The wise man said, **“The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water:**

**he turneth it whithersoever he will”** (Prov. 21:1). We also read these words of King Jehoshaphat: **“And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee”** (II Chron. 20:5-6)? Wherever men are, God is in control, and He is the God of even those that are spiritually dead.

And, one day, even those that have all their lifetimes denied Him and failed to worship Him, will fall down on their faces, and praise Him as God. We read in Philippians 2:9-11, **“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

*He is God even over death and the grave.* We read the words of the Apostle Peter, that he spoke concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ: **“Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One**

**to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear”** (Acts 2:24-33). I think we could consider the Lord to be God over the dead in the sense that He is mightier than death. In fact, when we consider the words of the Apostle Peter, we find it was not possible that he should be holden of it. In other words, there is no possibility that death or the grave or Hell should ever have any hold, or authority, or power over the Lord Jesus Christ.

*He is God even over the deceased, mortal bodies of the children of God.* If the Lord Jesus Christ does not return first, one day, each and every one of us will depart this mortal life, and will lay down our mortal bodies in death. What happens at that time? Has death won? Has our God been defeated? He that has promised to save us, has He failed in the case of our mortal bodies? Well, according to the Scriptures, we must answer all of these questions with an emphatic, “No!” Even

though our bodies may be buried, burnt, drowned, torn asunder, or otherwise destroyed; still, we know that in the end, our God, who is God over death, will redeem our mortal bodies. We read the words of the man Job: **“Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me”** (Job 19:23-27). To me, this is one of the most fascinating portions of Scripture in all the Holy Writ. Do you see how convinced the man Job was of the ultimate end of his body? Notice that he cries out, **“Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever”** (Job 19:23-24)! Job was very certain of these things. His understanding of the favor and grace of God – his understanding and trust in the power and purpose of God – far exceeded the supposed wisdom and understanding of the learned Sadducees of the time of the Lord Jesus Christ's earthly ministry. He was alive and in Christ, even as the Sadducees foolishly provoked the Lord and Saviour of men. And, in the case of Job, his desire was granted, because his words were written, and they were printed in a book, and they were graven in the very Word of God – which words the Sadducees and others ought to have trusted in, as they

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debated life, death, the spirit of man, and the powers of God.

What is it that Job was so certain about? Well, even you and I, with all of the Word of God at our disposal, could not have described the resurrection and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ any clearer or better than what Job did. Though our bodies be destroyed in the grave; still, in the flesh we shall see God! Our eyes shall behold Him – these eyes that have seen so much misery, sin, and depravity – we shall see Him in the flesh, because this corruptible must put on incorruption. We will be made new. The bodies that are now will be changed into spiritual bodies to house our spirit and soul for all eternity.

Job is not the only Old Testament saint who acknowledged that his God was the redeemer of the flesh, and the God of death and Hell. We read also the words of King David: **“I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore”** (Ps. 16:8-11). Now, I know that Peter quotes this passage in reference to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (See Acts 2:25-28). However, though the phrase **“..thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption,”** must refer to the Lord Jesus Christ and His

resurrection; could the rest of this passage not be applied to David, just as much as to the Lord Jesus? Consider, the psalmist David must have had a glad heart; he knew that he would not be moved; therefore, he knew that his flesh would rest in hope. In fact, we might even say that David is telling us, because of the Holy One that would not see corruption, whose soul would not be left in Hell – because it was not possible that He would be holden of it – because of these things, David’s flesh, too, would rest in hope!

## CONCLUSION

I believe that the death, burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, takes the God of the living, and makes Him also the God of the dead. Maybe this is a part of what we are being taught in the words of the Apostle Paul which are found in Ephesians 4:8-10, **“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things).** There is not any place where the person and the power of God are not felt. I know that Satan brought sin to mankind when he tempted Eve, and when Eve succumbed, and when Adam rebelled against God. I know that death came upon mankind because of sin. And yet, all of these are subject to the will and purpose of God. There is not any power that Satan has which God cannot overcome. There is not any strength that sin, death, or the grave has, which Jesus Christ cannot conquer on our behalf. And this is what He did when He died for us, and rose again. He laid

down His life – man or Satan or the powers of Hell do not have the power to take the life of Jesus Christ, but He laid His life down for us. Then, He took up that life again. No power on earth or under the earth could keep Him, or prevent Him. He has power to lay down His life; He just as certainly has power to take up that life again. Therefore, those that are His – those who are saved as a result of His salvation that He accomplished – will also take part in the life of Jesus Christ. He has power to take our lives and to make them His own; certainly, in His person there is no death, and there is no power of the grave that can keep us from Him.

Of most importance to us, is the fact that God is the God of the living, and this means that we will forever live in Him, and have our eternal life in Him. But, we must also recognize it is very important that He is also the God of the dead: because, as the God of the dead, we can be sure that death and the grave hold no power over us. In fact, He has conquered death, and will even redeem our mortal bodies from the grave, or change them in a twinkling of an eye, at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The sweet psalmist of Israel said this: **“Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night**

**shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them”** (Ps. 139:5-17)! Life and death; Heaven and Hell; light and darkness; these are all alike to our Lord and Saviour. He rules in every place, and in all times. We should praise the Lord that He is the God of the living and the dead.



## Four Points about

(Continued from page 1) ♦

**enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible”** (Heb. 11:23-27).

I want to consider five thoughts from this passage:

(1) *By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.*

Moses did not care about earthly titles, and he did not care

♦ (Continued on page 7)



# Small Drops

By Joseph M. Sidders of  
Temperance, Michigan

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



## POOL OF SATISFACTION

Our youngest daughter is four now, and she has reached a phase where every stuffed animal she comes into contact with is the one that will make her most whole. I am sure I was the same way at this age, which would explain the large collection of GI Joe's, Ninja Turtles and Micro-machines I had growing up. We have tried to combat the letdown of not getting everything she sees by taking pictures of her with the 'stuffy' she wants so desperately to join our family. We use the picture as an incentive to work toward, and so begins the journey of earning what she feels would make her whole. Most times we find that she is restored to her 'completed state' after a while at home reunited with all her favorite animals we already said yes to.

I believe every age succumbs to the idea that there is "just one more thing" that we need to be content or satisfied. Just a little more money, just a little bigger house, just one more car, just one more piece of jewelry, just one more video game and so on.

In John's account of the Gospel, chapter 5, we see the story of a man who had been afflicted with an infirmity for 38 years. He was sitting by the pool known as Bethesda which meant the "house of mercy." He was surrounded by a great multitude of folks who were sick, crippled, blind and diseased, because according to verse 4, **"an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and**

**troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had."** This man was by this pool of healing, which after being afflicted for 38 years was a miracle in itself, but he still had to do one more thing. After the angel stirred the waters, he needed to get in. He describes in verse 7 of the text that every time the water was troubled, he had no one to help him get to it. He goes on to explain that as he moves to drag himself in on his own, another steps in front of him claiming the miracle.

In this portion of Scripture, we see Jesus approach the man asking if he seeks to be made whole. The man tells him he can not. He has been told there is one more thing to do, and he just can not do it. What was Jesus' response? The Scriptures say in John 5:8-9, **"Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked."**

Praise God there is not an endless line of "one more things" to do for us to be made whole. Despite our waning contentment during certain seasons of life, we are not left alone to earn our way to the prize or dodge those who block us. There is only Jesus Christ, the Son of God. John 14:6 proclaims that Jesus is **"the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (Him)."**

## SEPARATION ANXIETY

It has been another late night of crying from our tiny bundle of joy. As my sweet little girl sleeps soundly in my arms, I gently get up and begin to walk toward the crib. Each step I take in darkness seems to be so much louder than the many journeys through this hallway in daylight. I finally arrive with every muscle in my body straining to keep my body quiet as to not awaken the beast... er...baby. I gently pull her away from my body to clear the side rails and begin her descent to the mattress. Her head is cushioned against the springs, and she seems to subconsciously be searching for something as her body rolls ever so slightly to one side. I walk backwards a few steps, convinced that if I break my stare she will wake. As I reach the doorway, I think to close the door slightly to dampen any other foreign sounds that might make their way in to wake her. Into the hall now, I allow the celebration of success to creep in, and then it happens. My daughter, who is always so lovely during the day, has begun to scream as though her life depended on it.

I do not know of a parent who cannot relate to this experience. According to experts, our children respond in this way, even while they are awake, because they sense that an emotional connection has been broken. Though we may even be in the same room, children can sense when they are not the center of our universe. That is what they desire, it is what they need.

At the ninth hour, on the day of His crucifixion, Jesus Christ cried out from the cross **"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"** which is to say **"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"** (Matthew 27:46). It was at this moment

my Lord and Savior took upon Himself the punishment for my sins. He had been humiliated and disgraced for me up until this point, but now He was paying the debt I owed. I could never pay for the freedom He has provided. In Matthew 27, verse 50, He gave up His life for me.

What was the great suffering that came upon Jesus and caused Him to cry out that He had been forsaken? He was, for the first time, experiencing a separation from the Father. To God, Jesus was and always would be His Son. Jesus could not feel Him though, as our sins separated them from one another. There was an insufferable state of anxiety for our Savior!

Jesus was illustrating for us, even from the cross, our need for the Father. My daughter's crying was her way of showing she had a need for me. I look back today and miss that raw emotional response that told me she loved me. When was the last time you cried out to the Father in recognition for your need of Him?



## Four Points about

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about Pharaoh's throne! He did not want to be called an Egyptian, even if it meant being the king of Egypt! Moses wanted to be called the son of His own mom and dad, Mr. and Mrs. Moses. He wanted to be numbered with his own people, even if that meant suffering reproach as a Jew – so what is new? That has always been the way of life for God's people...the way of suffering, the way of reproach, and the way of persecution.

*(2) Secondly, by faith Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the*

*♦ (Continued on page 8)*

# Four Points about

*(Continued from page 7) ♦*

*people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.*

Moses had plenty of opportunity in Pharaoh's palace to be familiar with the many pleasures of sin. But by faith in His God, he cared nothing for it! Yes, beloved, there is a pleasure of sin, but it is only for a season. It is only for a short time, and then the pleasure turns to pain, and heartache, and misery, and finally death...and that without remedy! And yes, it takes a lot of faith to choose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy all the pleasures that sin has to offer!

*(3) Thirdly, by faith Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.*

What is more valuable, beloved, all the wealth in Egypt or the eternal wealth of Christ? Well, where is the wealth of Egypt now? Where is the wealth of great Babylon now? And some day men will be asking, where is the wealth of America now? Where is the wealth of rich men when they die? It is gone, and it is soon forgotten along with them.

But where is Moses' wealth in Christ today? It is eternal in the Heavens where moth or rust cannot corrupt, and thieves cannot break in and steal. Beloved, labor not for temporal wealth that perishes, but for the eternal riches of Christ in glory! Remember Moses, the man who had it all, and threw it all away in favor of Christ, and the true, lasting riches of glory!

*(4) Fourthly, by faith Moses forsook Egypt not fearing the wrath of the king.*

Moses did not want anything to do with Egypt. He wanted out of that place. He wanted to be in

God's country with God's people. He told old Pharaoh that "there shall not an hoof be left behind." They were getting out of Egypt and they were not coming back no more, no more, no more! And Moses did not leave anything behind when he left!

God help us to get out of Egypt and to stay out of that cursed place. God help us to find our home and happiness in God's country with God's people. It takes faith to do this, beloved!

*(5) Fifthly, by faith Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible.*

Moses, how can you do all these things? How can you deny earthly power and wealth, and the pleasures of sin for a season? How can you endure reproach and persecution as a child of God? The answer; by seeing Him who is invisible! Is that not really what faith is? We believe in the Almighty God of Heaven, Who can do all things, Who has power to save us, and power to keep us, and power to bless us – and yet we have never seen Him! Lord give us the faith of Moses, that we, too, might see the invisible God, and win the victory over Egypt!

## 2. SECONDLY, WE WANT TO CONSIDER THE FAITHFULNESS OF MOSES.

We have seen the faith of Moses, now we want to observe that faith produces faithfulness. People are inclined to be devoted and committed to things they really believe in, and things they believe are really worth their time and effort. A child of God with great faith, who really believes that Christ is worth their time, and worth their substance, and worth their labor, will exhibit great faithfulness to the Lord and His cause. Well, Moses was just such a man of great faith, and consequently he was a man of great faithfulness to his God.

*The Bible says in Hebrews 3:5 that Moses was faithful in all his house.*

Moses was very faithful over all that God put in his charge. When Miriam and Aaron challenged the authority and leadership of their brother Moses in Numbers 12, God told those 2 rebel rousers that His servant Moses was faithful in all His House. Why is it that people in the church who are far less faithful to the Lord, are the ones who challenge God's faithful ministers who have given their entire lives, and all their substance, and everything they have to serving the Lord? Probably because they are envious and jealous of the man of God whom the Lord has set over His work.

*(1) First, Moses was faithful to the people of Israel, who were God's household.*

For 40 long years Moses was faithful to God's people by committed and dedicated service to them.

He was faithful to provide for God's people. He gave them manna from Heaven and water from the Rock. Now, we know it was the Lord, but He used Moses to give them all these things.

He was faithful in judging God's people to insure that justice was done among them.

He was faithful to lead God's people and direct them in the way the Lord would have them to go.

He was faithful to mediate for them when they sinned against God, when God would have utterly destroyed them on numerous occasions, but Moses stood in the breach and pleaded for them.

Yes beloved, Moses was faithful over all the household of God over which God had made him the overseer. Would to God that this could be said of us pastors who have been given a similar charge

over the flock of God!

*(2) And even more importantly, Moses was faithful in all the House of God.*

That is, he was faithful in all the Holy things pertaining to God's House.

Moses was faithful to the Word of God. He was faithful to write the inerrant Word of God as he was inspired by God, and then he was faithful to administer the Word of God to the people of God. Moses taught the truth of God's Word just as he received it from the Lord. He did not alter it; he did not embellish it; he did not pick and choose what he would teach. But Moses was faithful to teach all the Words that God gave him, exactly as He gave them. God help us to do the same.

Moses was faithful in his duties to build God's House exactly according to the pattern given to him by God in the mount. He did not change or alter one single stitch! Everything God told Him to do was necessary and important, and that is how Moses built it. Christ built His House, His Church in the New Testament, exactly according to His pattern, and it is our duty to continue building His Churches exactly according to the pattern He gave us in His Word. God help us to be like Moses, and faithfully build the House of God today!

Moses was faithful to intercede for God's people in prayer, to seek God's forgiveness for their sins, and to seek God's loving favor in their behalf. May God give us a heart to pray for God's people today, and to intercede on their behalf. That should be the heart of every pastor!

He was faithful in revealing the Messiah to God's people. Remember, people were saved back then the same way they are

♦ *(Continued on page 10)*





# Narrow Paths

By Doug Newell IV of  
Clendenin, West Virginia

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

## SAFE AND SECURE

**"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever" (Jude 24-25).**

The final note of the epistle of Jude (verses 24-25) points believers to Jesus. Jude warned us to watch, charged us to vigilance, cautioned us not to fall, or stumble, the letter concludes with praise to Christ, the One who is able to keep us from falling. Jude's doxology is an example of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. We are responsible to watch, to be diligent, to contend for the faith, but our security is found, not in our hands, but in God's. We should live as if it all depends on our works, but trust knowing it all depends on God's grace. It is the Lord who forgives our sins (I John 1:8-9). He keeps us by graciously giving us faith in Him. God gives us a hatred of sin, and leads us not into temptation, but in paths of righteousness. Because the Christian abides in Christ, we have security in Christ, knowing that He will keep us from falling away forever. In Philippians 1:6, Paul was confident God would carry out what He started and not leave the work unfinished. Jesus does not begin a work of salvation and then abandon it halfway. Some are plagued by the fear of losing this precious

gift of salvation. Seeing our sin, meditating on the Holiness of God, fearful of God's judgment makes one sense their great failures. Truly, our sin is great, and our failures are great, but our Saviour is greater, and there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). God is able to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

Christ will present us faultless before the Father in love. I have sinned. I still sin. I am not perfect and certainly not faultless. But I am not saved by my works. I am not saved by my righteousness. My sins are forgiven. My debt is paid. I received a pardon, all by the finished work of Jesus Christ. I have been washed clean of my sin, justified by God, and the pure and perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to my account and with **"exceeding joy"** Christ will present me as a trophy of His grace. That great day, the homecoming of His people and the gathering of the family of God.

Our hope rests on the power of Christ. He is the Rock upon which we stand, the anchor of our soul, strong and immovable and impenetrable stronghold. We serve the **"only wise God our Saviour"** who ordained the great plan of redemption and made the way for my salvation, with no loophole, no unthought of contingency, who ordained my salvation before the world began – to this God, be glory

and honor, and worship. To him, all "majesty ascribe." To him, all dominion, power, might, and authority belongs, both now and ever. Eternal praise to Jesus the captain of our salvation, now and forever. The eternal Son provides eternal life and the saints of God will glorify and praise Him for evermore.

## MAN OF SORROWS

**"... a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.<sup>4</sup> Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted"** (Isa. 53:3-4).

If you turn on most TV preachers, you probably would not have to wait long before you heard one talk about how God wants you happy. The prosperity gospel teaches that God will favor His people with material blessings and happiness. Our Lord Jesus did not have such a life. He was a **"man of sorrows."** It seems counterintuitive, one blessed of God would be acquainted with grief.

Jesus grieved at sin (Mark 3:5). Jesus was sorrowful in the Garden Gethsemane (Matthew 26:37-38), and over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44), and at the graveside of Lazarus (John 11:35). Jesus was no stranger to grief. Jesus was truly man, thus sorrowed and grieved, but without sin. Jesus sorrowed in personal humiliation and suffering. Jesus was acquainted with a life of hardship, toil, and pain. Most of all, He was grieved as our sin bearer and was sorrowful on the cross.

As our Lord hung on that awful tree, men looked on Jesus and despised Him. How terrible

a sight, the children of Abraham rejected the God of Abraham. How sad, He, whom the Father gloried, was denied, rejected, and despised before Pilate. What an awful scene, men claiming to look for the Messiah rejected Him in favor of a murderer. What a terrible sight, they killed the Prince of life (Acts 3:13-15). They despised His features, His shame, but they despised His person. They did not esteem Him as God's Son, the Saviour and King, but they esteemed Him as stricken and smitten of God. He whom the Father calls His beloved Son, the world saw as despicable. The man of sorrows bore our grief and carried our sorrows.

But while the prophet was speaking of the men who lived in the time of Christ specifically, he said **"we,"** not **"they."** We hid as it were our faces from Him. We esteemed Him not. We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. Everyone who has heard the gospel and not believed, has in essence looked upon the Lord Jesus and judged Him not worthy of esteem. You have weighed the Lord of glory in the balance and found Him wanting. But, when you turn your eyes from Jesus, to whom will you turn? Where will you go? Who can stand in your stead? Who can bear your sins? Who can remove your guilt? Who can cover your shame before a Holy God? And yet the despised and rejected One, whom we judged rejected, bore our sins. I was the reason the Lord was crucified, and yet, I looked upon His crucifixion as a matter to reject Him. Oh, wicked heart! The Lord died, not for His sins, but for mine.



## Four Points about

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saved today. There has only ever been one way of salvation. People had to hear about Christ, and I am confident that Moses was faithful in preaching the Gospel to them.

In all these things, Moses never faltered in His faithfulness in all his house. Pastors and church members would do well to consider the faithfulness of Moses, that we might emulate him, and strive to be faithful over all our house; especially we who are pastors, whose responsibilities are similar to those of Moses. May it be said of you and me that “he was faithful in all his house.”

### 3. THIRDLY, WE WANT TO CONSIDER THE FAILURES OF MOSES.

Moses had great faith, and Moses was very faithful in all his house. And yet, Moses was still a sinner saved by grace. He was subject to sinning just as other men are. He was a man of like passions, and at times he sinned, and did things that were displeasing to God.

Moses questioned God at times. He questioned his own calling and his own ability to be the leader of God’s people...as if God did not know what He was doing when He called Moses to lead His people!

Moses also questioned why God called him to lead such a rebellious people, who constantly murmured and complained about God’s provisions, and about Moses. Maybe we pastors have questioned God for the same reason! But it is not our place to question God!

Moses sometimes complained to God when the children of Israel rebelled against God, and rebelled against his God given authority to lead them. Oh boy, how pastors

today can relate to this!

Moses got angry at times, and all too often he let his anger show in ways that were harmful to his own cause, and to the cause of God.

In anger he broke the tables of stone, when Israel worshipped the golden calf which Aaron had made. Although God did not charge Moses with a trespass in this case, Moses’ anger still got the better of him.

In anger Moses smote the rock twice. We read in Numbers 20:10-12: **“And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.”**

In this case Moses was charged with sin because he failed to sanctify the Lord in the eyes of the people. This cost him and Aaron their entrance into the promised land.

So then we see that Moses was not perfect. He was said to be **“...very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth”** (Num. 12:3), yet he got angry, and he complained, and he questioned God. He was a sinner still. Moses was a great man of God, but He also had his share of shortcomings.

So when you consider your pastor, and you look to him for an impeccable example for you to follow – just remember that

Moses, one of the greatest leaders in the history of Israel, also had his failures and his shortcomings. The best of men will fail us at times. Only Christ is a perfect example for us to follow.

### 4. FOURTHLY AND FINALLY, WE WANT TO CONSIDER THE FATE OF MOSES

**“And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated”** (Deut. 34:1-7).

**“And Moses the servant of the Lord died.”** This is the sad end of Moses’ life, because he died before he could enter the promised land. He saw it from Pisgah’s lofty heights, but God would not let him go in. Why? Because of that one sin when he smote the rock twice. Moses wanted to go in so badly. He tried to talk the Lord into letting him go in, but the Lord would not let him.

**“And I besought the LORD at that time, saying, O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter”** (Deut. 3:23-26).

Moses asked God for many things in his lifetime, but this was one thing God would not let him have. One sin kept both Moses and Aaron out of the promised land. This was truly an example of the saying, “so close, yet so very far away” ...From Pisgah’s lofty heights Moses could see all the good land God promised His people. He had spoken so much about it to God’s people, how they would conquer the inhabitants of the land, and how they would inherit the blessings of this rich and fruitful land and divide it among themselves for an inheritance forever...but because of one sin, Moses was not allowed in.

Moses died there in the land of Moab, and God buried him. God brought Moses to life to save His people from their bondage in Egypt. God preserved his life when Pharaoh would have had him killed as an infant. God made Moses a great leader, a compassionate intercessor, an obedient servant, and a faithful friend of God and His people. And at the end of his life, God buried him. Moses is the only man that I know of that God buried. I do not know what significance there

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# Other Little Hills

By Timothy J. Hille of  
Ashland, Illinois

"The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness" (Psalms 72:3).



## DO YOU HAVE PLEDGE CARD CHRISTIANITY?

**"O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him"** (Ps. 34:8). The majority of churches today are filled with people who have never experienced the saving grace of the true and living God. They are religious, yes; they believe in something, perhaps; but they have not renewed their hearts by faith, turning from their own innate wickedness in repentance to the holy and righteous against Whom they have greatly sinned in arrogant pride. Consider: a man may see a table set with a delicious and nutritious dinner. He may know something of the nutritional value of the food, and may even mentally acknowledge that he requires nourishment in order to live. He may know some facts about the one who set the table and provided the meal. This man may even go so far as to admire the meal, the person who provided the meal, and tell others that he "believes" the meal to be good and worth eating. Nevertheless, if the man does not eat the food that has been so graciously supplied, that man is none the better, and goes on his way still deprived of the benefits of the table so bountifully set. So it is with the majority of religious persons in this hour: they have heard of Christ; they admire many things about Christ; they give a mental assent to the things the Bible says about Christ; but they do not partake of Christ themselves, nor are they changed by Christ inwardly, because they

have not experienced His saving grace and power personally.

Jesus gave the people of His day a very pointed illustration, which they found hard to digest spiritually. **"For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"** (John 6:33-37). More to the point, Jesus said, **"As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me"** (John 6:57). Some mistakenly take this to be some kind of ritual, like pagan idolatry, thinking that eating bread in a religious service is what Jesus intended. Jesus said that we must partake of Him by believing on Him, trusting in Him and in Him alone; and that this is the gracious operation of God upon a sinner's heart, not the product of a man's own efforts or decision-making abilities.

One reason many are deceived in this hour about the condition of their souls is that they have been duped by the popular false evangelism of the hour, which suits the thinking of the spiritually dead heart. People are told to "make a decision for Christ" or "pray this prayer as sincerely as

you can." Then, they join the church and follow the rules of that church, not much differently than had they signed a pledge card and joined a social club, agreeing to abide by the rules required for membership and participation in that club. The heart-changing work which only God can produce, cleansing a person from sin by the blood of His Son Jesus, is never experienced. The person has not tasted the goodness of God in salvation, merely the powerless form of man-made religion.

Dear reader, please understand the Bible biblically. You will not tell God how you will be saved – God will tell you. You will not tell God that you are saved – God will tell you. Something far greater than a decision to change moral standards is required to make a spiritually dead child of wrath a spiritually alive child of God. A gracious work of God is required, and you must become a partaker of His grace and goodness. In other words, **"Ye must be born again"** (John 3:7).



## Four Points about

(Continued from page 10) ♦

was in God burying Moses, but if I have to be buried, I would not mind if God buried me.

Its kind of odd, but no one knew where God buried Moses. But had they known, they probably would have made a shrine out of his tomb and worshipped it. I suppose that is why God buried him.

And it said in verse 7 that Moses' natural force was not abated, and his eye was not dim. In other words, he was in perfect health at 120 years of age. It was just God's time for him to die, plain and simple. Even perfect health will not prevent us from dying when it is our time to go!!!

Finally, we want to see Moses one last time. **"And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias"** (Mark 9:2-5).

The final appearance of Moses was here in the New Testament on the mount of transfiguration. Moses, what more could you ask or hope for, as you stand with the blessed Lord Jesus Christ and behold His glory? Not the back parts of God as you saw once before, but face to face with Christ your Saviour. Now he had seen everything any man could ever hope to see...he saw the glorified Son of God!

## CONCLUSION

What lessons might we learn from this message?

-Remember the faith of Moses and get out of Egypt and stay out!

-Remember the faithfulness of Moses and be faithful to what God has called you to do.

-Remember the failures of Moses and learn from his mistakes to be a better Christian.

-And remember the fate of Moses, that one day we, too, will see the glory of the Lord face to face! Not in the promised land of Canaan, but in the promised land of Heaven itself.

May God bless the message to your hearts is our prayer!





# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

## 1. What are the best ways to discipline children? -Scotland

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Entire books have been written on this vital and important subject. It is a subject matter that has received very little attention due to the culture's growing sensitivity to the scourge of political correctness.

The first key to all forms of discipline is that the parents must bow to the authority of the inspired Word of God. Not their emotions or feelings. Not the writings of secular experts on child rearing. **"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"** (Prov. 22:6). Consistent training, instruction, and corrective discipline involves a lifetime of commitment and submission to the authority of the Word of God. I would urge all parents to discipline themselves to read a chapter of Proverbs every day as a helpful reminder of the weighty responsibility they have in rearing children. **"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame"** (Prov. 29:15). **"Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul"** (Prov. 29:17). Believe and obey the inspired Word of God if you really desire to discipline your children in the ways of righteousness and godliness.

Next, parents must be committed to providing a godly example to their children. Perhaps the greatest form of instruction and discipline you can provide your child is a life that is dedicated to bringing honor and glory to God. Proverbs 23:22-26 declares: **"Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old. Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice. MY SON, GIVE ME THINE HEART, AND LET THINE EYES OBSERVE MY WAYS"** (emphasis mine). Parents you must determine every day to remember that little eyes are always watching you! Are you faithfully serving the Lord? Are you committed to obeying the commands of God? Do you love the Lord and strive to honor Him daily? You will find that your humble submission to God by way of cheerful obedience to His commands will provide a powerful reason for your children to follow you as you follow the Lord.

Consider the admonition that God gave to Israel in Deuteronomy 6:4-9: **"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:**

**And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."** These verses clearly indicate that all discipline must begin with consistent, faithful, daily instruction that centers around God's Word! This must be done by way of precept and practice. There must be verbal admonitions, warnings, and instruction from the principles of God's Word as well as a hearty desire to put into practice what the Word says. All discipline must begin with the foundation of Scriptural instruction. This is not a one time event. It should not be done by starting and stopping. Every day your children must see your commitment to teach them the principles of the Word of God.

Parents must explain the principles of obedience to authority as established in God's Word. Explain God's order in the home. As a parent you must establish your God given authority and your children must understand why it is important to obey and submit to it. Children cannot be left to themselves. They must be guided, taught, encouraged and loved.

Charles Bridges in his commentary on Proverbs, gave some sage advice to parents:

"At whatever cost, establish your authority. Let there be but one will in the house. And let it be felt that this will is to be the law. The child will readily discover, whether the parent is disposed to yield, or resolved to rule. But

however trifling the requirement, let obedience be, in small as great matters, the indispensable point. The awe of parental authority is perfectly consistent with the utmost freedom of childlike confidence...while it operates as a valuable safeguard against a thousand follies of uncontrolled waywardness. But ever let us put the awful alternative vividly before us. Either the child's will, or the parent's heart, must be broken. Without a wise and firm control, the parent is miserable; the child is ruined." (p. 573)

The rod and reproof are both necessary to impart wisdom to children. Children must be taught what is right by precept and practice. They must be taught that obedience to the principles of God's Word is of primary importance. It is best to reprove and rebuke with all long-suffering and with sound teaching. Parents are called to explain to children the way that is right and the way that honors God in every aspect of life. In order to achieve the desired end of reproof, it is absolutely necessary to correct them when they are wrong. If they are respectful of your parental authority a verbal reproof may be all that is needed to bring about change. All children are different in their personalities and temperaments. However, if children will not hearken to loving rebuke aimed at setting them on the strait and narrow, then the reproof must be accompanied by the rod of correction. Willful rebellion and disobedience must be met with the rod of reproof and correction. Children must learn to bend and bow to the will of their parents or else they will never understand the principles associated with obedience to authority. Little

◇ (Continued on page 14)

## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

*Submit your questions on any Bible topic.*

2. Are there any examples of flocks having multiple shepherds in the Scripture that could be seen as examples of churches having multiple pastors?

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**“Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD”** (Jer. 23:1-4).

Pastors are to be the shepherds of the flocks/churches that the Lord has appointed as the physical leaders and teachers of His New Testament Baptist churches. **“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”** (Eph. 4:11-12). **“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder,**

**and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble”** (I Pet. 5:1-5).

According to these verses and ultimately God’s order, should there be multiple shepherds in the Lord’s churches? As seen in the Bible, there are many teachers and helpers in the Lord’s churches that may be given titles, such as youth pastor, music pastor, associate pastor, etc, but just as God gives the headship of the family to the man, as head among equals, the responsibility of the New Testament church requires one shepherd, or one pastor. He may be called senior pastor in larger churches, but the authority of the pulpit must lie in his leadership and the accountability will rest in his responsibility when God judges the church for her faithfulness. **“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of**

**their conversation. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you”** (Heb. 13:7, 17).

Pastoral authority is just as vital and Scriptural as church authority. A church in one accord is a blessing from God and that does not come from diversity, but rather from singular leadership from one pastor, preaching one truth, from one Bible, in one church, under one God. The pulpit is to be a place of rule and authority, that in reality requires submission and obedience to the preaching and teaching of God’s Word. **“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred”** (II Tim. 2:15-18). Hymenaeus was not following his pastor! Philetus was cancerous!

Multiple pastors with multiple truths will pull a church apart at the seams of depravity. When a church calls a pastor, it is absolutely the most terrifying and weighty action it will ever take. Much prayer must go into finding the man that God has for them. To call any other man is to risk the entire church and every member with dangerous heresy and unacceptable leadership. Satan has no greater targets in this world than the Lord’s Baptist churches, and every church needs a godly angel (Rev. 1:20) to protect them! Pray much for your pastor and submit your every energy

to making your church a godly instrument in your community to God’s glory and honor, and that starts with following ONE godly pastor/shepherd! **“The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine”** (John 10:13-14). Selah! Think about it!

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**“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine”** (John 10:14).

**“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd”** (John 10:16).

I believe that a church should only have one pastor. The example is very plain. Jesus Christ is the example for everything we do or want to know about. If you know anything about sheep, then you should know that sheep only will respond to one shepherd because they know him. If I were to go in among a flock of sheep they would scatter, because they do not know me. But their shepherd they would know and follow.

When God gives a church a pastor (under-shepherd) there is no one that will care for that flock more than he will. There is a certain bond there, like nothing else. **“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles,**

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# Forum #1

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disobedient brats grow up to be incorrigible moral monsters.

Children must learn at an early age that there are consequences for sin, disobedience, and rebellion. I have met parents who say they could not possibly spank little Johnny. They often deceive themselves into thinking that little Johnny really does not deserve to be spanked like other children. They actually think that they know better than God how to deal with little Johnny. A parent who fails to spank their children for willful disobedience in order to correct them in love is rebelling against God's Word. Proverbs 13:24 declares: **"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."** That parent who refuses to spank a willful, rebellious child is asking for a world of trouble in the years to come.

When it is necessary to spank your children for willful disobedience, do it in love rather than in anger. Our Father chastens us because He loves us and desires for us to walk in His ways. Pray for God to give you the same desire as you administer the rod of correction. All corrective discipline should be followed by firm and loving instruction and explanation.

Without a doubt, the greatest wisdom a parent can impart to his children is the wisdom found in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. All the training, teaching, loving, sacrifice, and discipline needed to raise a child is worth it to see them come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. How wonderful and glorious it is to see your children trust the Lord Jesus, walk in His

ways, serve Him with a heart of consecration, and then pass on the same truth to their children! I Corinthians 1:30 declares: **"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."** Let this be the main goal of all child rearing, to honor God by directing our children to salvation in Christ.

To sum up the best way to discipline your children involves commitment to the authority of the Word of God, a desire to provide a godly example, consistent instruction from the Word, instilling respect for authority, and administering the rod of corrective discipline for willful disobedience.

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**"And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not" (Mark 2:18)?** The first principle and great purpose of discipline is to make disciples and followers of certain tenets and beliefs. "Come, follow me!" **"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were**

**fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men" (Mark 1:14-17).**

Discipline on every level begins with this ultimate purpose. Discipline in the matter of rearing children is no different. Our goal is to create little disciples of our highest beliefs and dearest doctrine. What is important to us, is what we are desirous of imparting unto our precious charges. 1) A solid faith in God. 2) A moral understanding of God's Law. 3) A love for God's church and saints.

So, the best way to discipline our children is: 1) Preach to them. 2) Take them to church. **"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7).**

The best way to discipline, is to lead by example. **"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1).** Notice the very practical application here of example discipleship. If "we" drive fast, our "disciples" will drive fast. If "we" like certain foods, our "disciples" will like certain foods. If "we" live like the devil, our "disciples" will live like the devil. Lord willing, if "we" live godly lives, our "disciples" are more likely to live godly lives. The natural tendency of sinners will be to sin, so we must mix into our disciplinary curriculum, much prayer, seeking God's grace in our charges' lives.

That brings us to corrective discipline, which may have been the main question, but which I believe, needed the preamble above to understand the true basis of discipline. If the children (actually, when the children)

disobey, we must continue our faithful discipline by interceding in their rebellious or ignorant actions. Corrective discipline should also be a memorable event, so that it is not quickly forgotten.

To infants and babies, a stern "no!" is a common deterrent. Just for their parents to show displeasure is often enough to persuade the young ones to seek to please by a moral and righteous act, and to avoid the "bad" actions or words that led to the unpleasant discipline. In families with strong bonds of love and respect, this will often be enough. Children have a God-given desire to please, rejoice, and have fun, that can be nurtured and fulfilled by simply following God's order found in the Bible.

Toddlers will also need to be taught fear and reverence of their parents and godliness. Spanking is a wonderful deterrent for this age group. The pain and rebuke in "using the rod," belt or switch is very memorable indeed. The fear of repeating this punishment will cause many children/disciples to avoid those "bad" actions and choices that led to this form of discipline. **"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Prov. 22:15), (Prov. 13:24, 23:12-14, 29:15)**

Deprivation of privileges, whether they be "precious things" or freedoms, can be valuable forms of discipline. Having to "sit in the corner" or be "grounded" are meant (again) to be memorable restrictions of their carefree life, by not allowing them their usual freedoms, toys, relationships, so that they may learn that "doing the right thing" is much more important than they have seriously considered before (Deut. 3:21-29, I Sam. 15:23-26).

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## Forum #1

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Again, the primary and best form of discipline, even at this point, is going to be a faithful example for the children to follow. As we exhibit the love and joy of our God as something that is awesome, magnificent and precious to us, it is only going to be natural for our little disciples to yearn for that same love, joy, peace and godliness, also. Again, by God's grace alone will come salvation and true discipleship in Jesus Christ, but certainly, our every effort should lead in that direction. As positive reinforcement spurs growth in that direction, so, too, is the necessary use of communicated shame and disappointment to halt rebellion, and turn the charges once again in the direction of honor, respect, and righteousness. Selah! Think about it!

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**"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him"** (Prov. 22:15).

I believe the Bible states, **"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"** (Prov. 22:6) and, **"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame"** (Prov. 29:15). I have time and time again seen these two Scriptures come to life. And I have seen many times that the child when he/she grows up has

hurt moms pretty bad.

I am a hard disciplinarian, and I believe God's Word is the best way to discipline a child. The teachers at school, your neighbors, and even the courts may not agree. But they are our children and the best way is God's way.

I have three rules for disciplining a child. 1) Do it God's way. 2) Do not discipline out of anger, take a minute to collect your thoughts. 3) Use the rod, not a belt or strap.

God's way is the best way, no one knows children better than God does. If you discipline out of anger you may hurt the child and/or yourself. I have this logic. When you need to discipline a child, depending on their age, have them go out and cut a tree limb and bring it to you. This is very comical sometimes and will give you a chance to cool down. The child will most likely do one of two things. They will either bring back this little tiny stick, (try not to laugh) or they will bring you back this huge limb, sometimes half the tree (again, try not to laugh). But send them back to get the right size. I would encourage you, dear reader, to study what the rod was and what it was used for. You do not want it too hard or stiff but one that is flexible, that will not break.

I tried a paddle once and a belt. The belt was so loose that I hit myself more than the child. And I think a paddle is too ridged, but a rod or stick really works well and stings just right and when applied properly will not do any long term damage, you do not have to swing it hard either to make your point. And do not use your hand, that will hurt you more than the child. God knows what He is doing, just trust Him.

Here is what I learned worked best. I had a set of rules that I made up, the Ten Commandments

for kids if you will, and I posted them on the refrigerator. When they broke the rules, I would sit them down and have them explain to me why they broke the rules. Now, if they lied to me that was an automatic whipping, no exceptions. I remember my daughter one time did something wrong and she lied about it. So into her room we went and she said, "Daddy, wait, wait let me explain" and I said "okay," and she went on to explain. And when she was done I asked her what the rule was about lying and she said "we get a whipping" and I said "that's right" and asked her if she lied to me and she said "yes." So I spanked her. Now I hated to spank my daughter because she was a good kid and never wanted to upset my wife or me, even though she did at times. But here is the kicker, right after I spanked her, she turned around and threw her arms around me and said, "I'm sorry daddy." That still brings tears to my eyes and melts my heart. So people can say what they want, God's way is always be the best way. You want to throw me in jail, go ahead. God will get me out, I have no doubt.

What we need today is more woodsheds built out back behind our houses. **"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we**

**have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby"** (Heb. 12:5-11).

God chastises us when we need it. Why? Because He loves us and we are His. Do you love your children? Then go and do likewise! I love that word **"exercised"** in verse 11. What that means, at least to me, is in order to have peaceable fruit God is going to wear you out, by exercising you! I devoted a chapter in my book along these lines. Ask for a free copy with your address and I will see that you get one. God Bless!

ROGER REED



## Forum #2

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**then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues"** (I Cor. 12:28).

There are, and can be, multiple elders in any one particular church, but only one pastor. A pastor can be an elder, but not all elders are pastors. I know of "churches" that have senior pastors, music pastors, youth pastors, but even there, the senior pastor is the Pastor. I think the others would qualify as elders or teachers. I know other denominations feel that all elders are their pastors, but that would

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## Forum #2

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be confusion to me and I find no Scripture to back up that thinking.

Back in our early history, because our churches were scattered around the country, there were circuit preachers that rode around to the various churches and preached, but were the pastor of only one church, or they would be just sent out by a church to preach for others.

If our churches continue to decrease in size we may have to revert back to circuit preachers, but they can only be the pastor of one church.

We do have deacons (elders) that try to be head honchos in their church, and that should never be the case. When that happens, all respect for the pastor goes out the window. I was hoping the problem was diminishing, but it seems it is growing worse than ever.

One flock, one shepherd, any other way would be total confusion as I said before. God Bless!

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Luke 2:8, 15 states: **"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night...And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath**

**made known unto us."** In this passage it is obvious that there was a plurality of shepherds. It also appears that they had some measure of cooperation and communication with one another as they managed their flocks. Often times there was a primary shepherd who was older and a younger one in training, usually a son within the shepherd's family.

Jesus indicated that the members of a particular flock would respond to the voice of one shepherd in John 10:3-5: **"To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."** There was an intimate bond between the shepherd and his sheep.

By way of metaphor there are plenty of similarities between the work of a shepherd and the work of a pastor/elder/bishop in the Lord's church. Depending on the size of the church there may be a plurality of pastors/elders/bishops. In a small church, the Holy Spirit may be pleased to call only one elder/pastor to minister to the flock. In larger churches, the Spirit may be pleased to call a plurality of elders to minister to the flock. In Acts chapter 20 Paul addressed the elders (plural) of the church at Ephesus regarding their responsibility to the flock of God: **"And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church...Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased**

**with his own blood"** (Acts 20:17, 28). The pastor/elder/bishop is to feed, lead, guide, and rebuke the sheep. As long as there is cooperation and unity, more than one elder can be a great benefit to a church. I served the Lord during the first five years of ministry in my home church at Wilmington Baptist from June of 1981 until April of 1986. During that time I received a wealth of on the job training for the ministry that involved preaching, teaching, visiting, etc. that helped to prepare me for my first mission work/pastorate. It was a great benefit to me as well as the Pastor. We worked together to minister to the saints of God. When he was away in a meeting, he knew he could trust me to faithfully preach the Word to the saints in his absence.

When I pastored Providence Baptist Church in Xenia, Ohio I was blessed to have other preachers/elders in the congregation who could minister to the saints if I was gone in a meeting or just needed a break. Fortunately, during my 25 year pastorate at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church I have had help from other preachers/elders from time to time while they prepare and train for the ministry. Currently, Elder Brandon Van Sickle is a great help to me and a blessing to our church. When he is not away supply preaching, I have him teach our Adult Sunday School class to give me a break and to be a blessing to our people. I would be considered the pastor/elder of our church and Brandon would be considered a preaching elder. We work together for the benefit of the flock of God. I know there is a day when God will call him to pastor a church, but I thank God that he can be used as a preaching elder in our church.

I know that there are several churches currently without pastors. I believe that God is sovereign in the appointment of under shepherds called to pastor a particular flock. God the Holy Spirit does the work of leading a church to call a specific man to pastor the flock. The Holy Spirit may be pleased to place two or more men in a church at any given time. He does so according to His own will and purpose.

TOM ROSS



## Church Government

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faith and practice" must no longer be a slogan of which we use to pat ourselves on the back with. We must actually believe and practice only what the Bible says.

### THEOCRATIC OR THEOCRACY

First of all, we must remember that the Lord's church is a Theocracy. By this we mean that it is governed by God Himself. Observe a verse in our original text: **"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence"** (Colossians 1:18). The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the church. He is the One who is in charge of His church. The Apostle Paul likens the church unto a body with Jesus as her head. The word "head" is used metaphorically, of the authority one has over others. In this instance, we find that Christ has the authority over the church as her head. We are told that Christ has all authority in things pertaining to the church. Ephesians 1:22—**"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church."**

The body is to follow the head. The head is not to follow the body. Our

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# Church Government

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bodies receive their instructions from the head. The brain sends signals to the rest of the body telling it what to do and the body responds to what the brain tells it to do. This is the imagery that Paul uses.

When I was in high school I tried bull riding. One of the instructions I was given was that wherever you are looking you will go; so keep your eyes focused on the back of the bull. This was so true! I remember one of the times I was riding. The bull turned and I was looking where the bull used to be; not where the bull was at presently. I was looking at the ground. The next thing I knew I was on the ground. My body went where the head was looking. So, too, ought we to follow Christ wherever He is leading us.

The Lord has every right to govern the church because it is His church. Matthew 16:18 — **“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”** Jesus said, **“...I will build my church...”** It is His church. The church is not ours. It is not the pastor’s church. It is not the church members’ church. It is the Lord’s church. He is the one building it. The Lord Jesus is the only One who knows how to build His church.

The Lord has every right to govern the church because He purchased it with His own blood. Acts 20:28—**“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”** When someone buys something, that person has authority over what was purchased. The Lord Jesus has authority over His church because He alone purchased it with His

blood.

All of this being true, Christ alone is in charge of His church. He alone directs and dictates to His church. The Lord Jesus made this abundantly clear when He said **“But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren”** (Matthew 23:8). We are all brethren. All the church members are on an equal level. Christ alone is over His church.

## HOW DOES CHRIST DICTATE TO AND DIRECT HIS CHURCH?

The Lord Jesus Christ dictates and directs His church with two things. One, the Holy Spirit of God; two, the Word of God. The Holy Spirit came upon the Lord’s church on the day of Pentecost. They were empowered to carry out the Great Commission. The Holy Spirit also provided leadership. **“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come”** (John 16:13). Observe, **“...the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth...”** This speaks of leading the Lord’s people. We are told in Romans 8:14—**“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”** Leadership: this is one of the duties of the Holy Spirit.

We also find that God’s Word, the Bible, dictates to us what we are to do. How do we know to preach the gospel? God’s Word tells us to! Mark 16:15—**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”** This was not a suggestion, but a command from the Head of the church.

Now, Holy Spirit leadership and the Word of God will never contradict one another. We know this because the Holy Spirit is the

author of the Scriptures. II Peter 1:20-21—**“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”** The Holy Spirit moved men to speak (or write) the Scriptures. So the Word of God and the Holy Spirit will never contradict one another. For example, will the Holy Spirit of God ever direct the pastor of one of the Lord’s churches to lead the church to baptize a baby? NO! EMPHATICALLY NO! Baptizing a baby would be contrary to what the Holy Scriptures say about the candidate for baptism. So it is not the Holy Spirit who is leading to baptize a baby, but some other spirit. Holy Spirit leadership and God’s written Word will always be in agreement with one another.

## HOW DOES THE CHURCH GOVERN?

While Jesus is the Head of the church, how is the church to carry on the Lord’s work? We have already noted that the Lord Jesus alone dictates and directs His church by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Now let us observe what is referred to as “Inter-human government.” Is the “inter-human government” of the church Popery? Episcopal? Presbytery? Deacon? None of these are the pattern found in the Scriptures. The Bible clearly teaches that the Lord’s church is to have a “congregational” form of “inter-human government.” By “congregational” form of government we mean that the membership of the church is to govern herself.

We must remember that there are three branches of government. There is the Legislative branch, which makes the laws; there is the Judicial branch, which interprets the laws; and there is the Executive branch, which enacts the laws. The

Lord’s church does not make laws or interpret laws. The Lord makes the laws. He has placed His commands in the Bible. He then interprets the laws with other Scriptures so that we may know exactly what His desire is. Our sole duty is to carry out the commands of the Head of the church. Christ Jesus has all power: **“And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth”** (Matt. 28:18). The church has limited power. We only have power to do what our Head has commanded us to do: **“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen”** (Matt. 28:19-20).

The Lord’s church is to carry out the command of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every church member has an equal say in the church government regardless of gender, position in the church, or time as a member. Some believe that their vote is worth more than others because they hold an office in the church. This is not scriptural. Others believe that the women cannot vote. Again, we must look to the Scriptures. Acts 1:14-15—we are told that the church was comprised of about **“an hundred and twenty”** disciples. This number included women. And when the time came to choose a replacement for Judas, the whole church **“gave forth their lots”** (Acts 1:26); not just the men. Every church member is an integral part of the body. Every church member supplies to the body of Christ. And the government of the church is no different. Every member is to participate.

In a congregational form of government, the majority makes the

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# 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.

## OHIO GOVERNOR SAYS HE WILL SIGN FETAL HEARTBEAT ABORTION RESTRICTION INTO EFFECT

It was recently reported that Ohio's Governor, Mike DeWine, who was sworn into office with his hand laying atop nine family Bibles, announced that he would "absolutely" sign the "heartbeat bill" into effect. Governor DeWine told radio host Hugh Hewitt that despite the former pro-life governor John Kasich's decision to veto the law, if it passed again, he would not hesitate to sign it. DeWine also noted that even if it did pass there would still be a fight. He told the conservative radio host, "Ultimately, Hugh, you and I both know that this thing once it is passed in Ohio, once we sign it, once it becomes law, Planned Parenthood is going to be in the next day, or that day, filing a lawsuit." He added, "But ultimately, this will work its way up to the United States Supreme Court. And they will make that decision." If Ohio passes the fetal heartbeat law, it would be the most restrictive abortion law in the United States.

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## NY LEGALIZES ABORTION UP TO MOMENT OF BIRTH, DEFINES PERSON AS SOMEONE 'WHO HAS BEEN BORN'

(CH)--New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed into law Tuesday a bill that goes beyond Roe v. Wade by making abortion a "fundamental right" up to the day of birth and banning limitations on abortion that the Supreme Court has permitted.

The new law, known as S240 in the state Senate and A21 in the Assembly, passed both houses and was signed by the governor all on the same day -- the anniversary of the 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling that legalized abortion nationwide. The Senate passed it by a vote of 38-24, the Assembly 92-47. Both are controlled by Democrats. "May almighty God have mercy on the state of New York," someone from the public gallery shouted after it passed the Senate.

New York State Right to Life and other pro-life groups called the law "extreme." "Supporters of RHA claim it merely seeks to update New York's laws to make them consistent with Roe v. Wade. This claim is false," the New York group said. "The changes this bill would make instead would authorize abortion through all nine months, for any reason, with no restrictions, up until birth, and even after birth if a child is born during the course of an abortion (i.e. infanticide)." The new law prohibits limitations on abortion that the Supreme Court has permitted, such as waiting periods, parental involvement laws, and bans on partial-birth abortion. Further, the law defines person as "a human being who has been born and is alive." It allows abortion post-viability when it is necessary "to protect the patient's life or health" -- exceptions that courts have interpreted broadly as referencing any pregnancy at any point. The new law also permits abortions, provided they are a licensed "health care practitioner" and acting in "good faith."

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## HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM GETTING TRANSGENDER REWRITE

(CH)--As reported by CBS the Harvard Medical School is undergoing a "comprehensive" review of what it teaches students about transgenderism as part of a three-year plan to unearth "wrong ideas" about gender and change what is taught in the classroom, the school says. Last fall Harvard launched the Sexual and Gender Minorities Health Equity Initiative, a three-year plan to better equip students so they can be ready to assist transgender patients. To accomplish that, curriculum will be rewritten and traditional concepts about gender will be jettisoned. The plan includes curriculum reform, faculty development and the recruitment of students and faculty who have interest or experience in transgender health. A Harvard press release said a committee of students and faculty members is conducting a "comprehensive review" of the medical school's four-year curriculum and searching for areas that need enhancement or that "contain assumptions or errors about sex and gender," such as "conflating sexual orientation with gender identity, presuming gender is immutable or treating heterosexuality as a default." "It is about unearthing where wrong ideas are unwittingly getting cemented in people's heads and correcting them from the beginning so they don't have to be unlearned later," said committee member Jessica Halem, the LGBT program director at Harvard Medical School. "It is about rewriting the stories and the language we use, built around a better understanding of how sex and gender really work in people's lives."

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## SUPREME COURT ALLOWS TRUMP'S TRANSGENDER MILITARY BAN TO GO INTO EFFECT

(CH)--The U.S. Supreme Court handed the Trump administration and social conservatives a major victory Tuesday when it let stand the military's ban on most transgender troops while lawsuits against the policy proceed. The debate is a holdover from the administration of President Obama, whose Department of Defense ended the ban on transgender troops and even allowed military personnel to undergo taxpayer-funded reconstruction surgery. After President Trump took office, the Department of Defense reversed that policy and replaced it with one that allowed transgender personnel but prohibited those who had "a history or diagnosis of gender dysphoria." The effect was to allow some transgender people to serve but only in their biological sex. Lower courts had blocked the Trump policy, but on Tuesday the Supreme Court ruled that the policy could go into effect while lower courts consider the cases. The Supreme Court refused the Trump administration's request to take up the issue immediately.

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## RESTAURANT FINED \$7,000 FOR TELLING BIOLOGICAL MALE NOT TO USE WOMEN'S RESTROOM

(CH)--A D.C. restaurant was fined \$7,000 by the city this week after it tried to stop a biological male customer who identifies as female from using the women's restroom. The restaurant also must post a sign declaring that "all individuals are allowed to use the restroom that corresponds to their gender identity or expression." The restaurant also must hold training for employees.

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## CALIFORNIA MAY TEACH KINDERGARTENERS THERE ARE 15 GENDERS

(CH)--Kindergarteners and other elementary-aged students in California's public schools could be

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# Bible & the Newspaper

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taught to reject “gender stereotypes” – such as about clothing, colors and toys – and to accept transgenderism as normative if proposed health guidelines are approved. There would be no opt-out option for parents.

One recommended book in the guidelines tells the story of a boy who wants to be a princess. Another recommended book teaches students there are at least 15 genders. That same book also tells children it is impossible to know if a baby is a boy or a girl. Another recommended children’s book is *Who Are You?: The Kids Guide to Gender Identity* by author Brook Pessin-Whedbee. The colorful book defines gender as “boy, girl, both, neither, trans, genderqueer, non-binary, gender fluid, transgender, gender neutral, agender, neutrois, bigender, third gender, two spirit....” All total, 15 possible genders are listed. The book says parents do not know if a baby is a boy or a girl at birth. “Babies can not talk, so grown-ups make a guess by looking at their bodies,” it reads.

Parents will not have the opportunity to opt their children out of the classes. That is because unlike sexual health education – which has an opt-out – materials that discuss gender, sexual orientation or family life are considered normative education.

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said parents likely will be considered more the “problem” than “the solution” in debate over the proposal. “There are many who argue that the role of the public schools is to correct the religious prejudices that children are likely to encounter in their homes,” Mohler said during the January 15 edition of *The Briefing*. “... Parents in California and elsewhere cannot say you were not warned.”

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## FEDERAL JUDGE ISSUES NATIONAL INJUNCTION, STOPS TRUMP’S NEW RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION RULES ON BIRTH CONTROL

(CH)--A Philadelphia federal judge has issued an injunction to stop the Trump administration’s rules which would broaden religious exemptions for the birth control mandate in health insurance plans, from going into effect. U.S. Federal District Court Judge Wendy Beetlestone issued a nation-wide injunction Monday to stop the Trump Administration’s contraception rules from going into effect, only one day after a California Federal Judge issued a 13-state injunction. The new rules would allow employers to choose if they would offer health care coverage that would include contraception based on their religious or moral values. Currently only churches and small private employers are exempt from the Obama-era policy that requires all employers to provide health-care coverage for birth control at no additional cost to the employee.

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## CHURCH REMOVES PASTOR FOR SIGN DECLARING HOMOSEXUALITY A SIN

(CH)--A Presbyterian pastor, Justin Hoke of Trinity Bible Presbyterian Church in Weed, CA, who posted a sign has been forced out of his California church. “It was determined that it would be in the best interest of the local body for us (TBPC and the Hoke family) to part ways,” Hoke wrote on his Facebook page. Hoke had posted a sign in front of the church that read: “Bruce Jenner is still a man. Homosexuality is still sin. The culture may change. The Bible does not.” The sign’s message, Hoke said, is reflected in Scripture. “The ultimate purpose was to say that while the culture may change, the Bible does not,” Hoke said. “The culture is now demanding that we call

‘good’ what the Bible calls evil.” The church, though, either did not agree with the message or did not want the attention.

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## INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS LESBIAN COUPLE PLANS TO HELP THEIR 5-YEAR-OLD BOY BECOME A GIRL

(CH)--A married lesbian couple in Britain says they will help their 5-year-old boy transition to a girl in a few years. Greg Rogers, a woman who identifies as a male, and wife Jody, have a 5-year-old son, Jayden, who “hates everything about being a boy.” Greg said that Jayden needed an operation to correct her hearing, but when she began talking she told her parents she hated wearing boys’ clothes. “At first, we thought it was probably just a phase but it has been consistent ever since,” Greg said. “She is adamant she is a girl. We have had people saying we are using Jayden for attention and that she just wants to be a girl because I changed sex. It is ridiculous. Jayden knows nothing about my past. She just knows me as dad.” Jayden is now signed up for counseling at the Young People’s Gender Service, a group that works with youth who are uncertain about their gender. She is too young for sex-hormone changing treatment.

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## TWO IRANIAN CHRISTIANS REFUSE JUDGES’ OFFER TO RENOUNCE FAITH, SENT BACK TO JAIL

(CH)--Two Iranian Christians this month refused to renounce their faith in court in exchange for freedom and were sent back to jail and told to await a verdict. Saheb Fadaie and Fatemeh Bakhteri, both Christians, were asked by their respective judges, Hassan Babaee and Ahmad Zargar, to renounce their faith, according to Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), a United Kingdom-based organization which supports religious freedom around the world. The two,

though, would not deny Christ during the court hearing in Tehran. Fadaie and Bakhteri are charged with “spreading propaganda against the regime,” which reportedly involved discussing Christian doctrines in a house church “regarding the ascendancy of Christ and the ultimate authority of [the] Bible.” The doctrines “were interpreted as being attacks on Islam,” sources said.

“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Mark 13:13).

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## 33 VIETNAMESE CHRISTIANS ARE ATTACKED, RAIDED AFTER THEY REFUSE TO WORSHIP BUDDHA

(CH)--According to International Christian Concern, Hmong Christians in Phá Lóm village, Tam Hợp commune, Nghệ An province were given an ultimatum by officials – renounce Jesus or face consequences. Pastor Hoang Van Pa told the ICC that four of the Christians were beaten and arrested and the village was raided three times, twice in November and then again at the beginning of December. After the raids, the ICC reports that authorities from the Vietnamese Interdisciplinary Inspection Team put 33 of the Christians in the community on public trial where they were asked to “abandon their religion and worship the Buddha statue instead.” According to Mr. Dzung of the IIT, refusing to denounce Protestantism and convert to Buddhism will result in the expulsion from Vietnam. The outlet reports that of the one million Hmong people in Vietnam, around 300,000 of them are Christians, many of whom have faced various forms of persecution including, “exclusion, harassment, discrimination, loss of property and even violent attack.”



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decision. So whatever 51% or more of the people vote to do, that settles the matter. If 51% of the church votes for something, then the 49% are to submit joyfully to what the church has voted for. Those who find themselves in the minority are not to be a stumbling-block as the Lord's church carries out what was voted upon. So as a congregational form of government, we cannot make up new laws. We cannot govern contrary to the dictates and decrees of the Head of the church. We cannot interpret a Scripture or Scriptures outside of what God has stated. We must, rather, do as He declares in His Word. Every church member is to have a say in the government of the church. We do this by voting in the matters of business of the church. We also find that we will have to bow to the decision of the majority of the church. We will have to humble ourselves and submit ourselves, one to another; for this is what the Scriptures teach.

## CORRUPTION EARLY ON

Satan has always sought to corrupt the Lord's church any way he is permitted to. Church government is no exception. There were some errors that crept into the Lord's church during the time of the apostles. **"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God, but he that doeth evil hath not seen**

**God"** (III John 9-11). We read of a man by the name of Diotrephes. He loved to have the preeminence in the church. But, this is not the place of any man. In Colossians 1:18, it states, **"...that in all things he [Christ Jesus] might have the preeminence."** Diotrephes had set himself in a place that belonged to the Lord. He was dictating to the church. Only Christ Jesus, the Head of the church, may dictate to the church. There are many Diotrephes in the Lord's church. Some in pulpits. Some in pews. We must all take heed to ourselves that we do not become a Diotrephes. We must all seek to make sure that Christ has the preeminence in all things, especially in our own lives. If the Lord Jesus has preeminence in my own personal life, then I will more likely give Him the preeminence in the church of the Living God. Now, we know that Satan is seeking to corrupt the Lord's church. We are familiar with his tactics. So let not Satan get an advantage of us when it comes to church government. II Corinthians 2:11—**"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."** Let us practice Christ having the preeminence in His church.

## THE DUTY OF THE PASTOR IN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH GOVERNMENT

There is such a thing as "Pastoral Authority." Every pastor of the church of the living God, has the authority to do the work of the pastor. If he did not have authority, then he could not carry out the work of the office of a pastor. This being said, we find that "church authority" and "pastoral authority" complement one another. "Pastoral Authority" and "church authority" are in no way contradictory to one another. So what is the duty of the pastor in a congregational form of government? We must ask ourselves again, **"What saith the scriptures..."**

(Rom. 4:3)? The Scriptures plainly tell us how "pastoral authority" and "church authority" complement one another. Observe, **"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation"** (Heb. 13:7); **"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you"** (Heb. 13:17). We have recorded for us in the Word of God the duty of the pastor. We are told that he is to **"rule over you."** To have someone rule over us is not the desire of the natural man. However, this is God's appointed man. He is placed in the church to **"rule over"** the church. He is not to **"rule"** over it in a dictatorial way. He is not to be a tyrant. He is not to be like Diotrephes who forbid others to receive the Apostle John and other brethren. Rather, the pastor is to lead by the Scriptures. He is to lead by example. He is to command the church according to **"Thus saith the LORD."** The pastor has authority to lead the church, but not to dictate.

I have heard the term "under-shepherd" all my life. This is in reference unto the pastor of a church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The pastor is the under-shepherd of the church. Where does this terminology come from? It comes from what the Scriptures teach. God refers in Scriptures to His people as sheep. John 10:27—**"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."** The Lord referred to His church as a flock: Acts 20:28—**"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own**

**blood."** We find that the Lord Jesus Christ is referred to as the **"chief Shepherd"** or the "head Shepherd" in I Peter 5:4. The context in which the Lord Jesus is referred to as the **"chief Shepherd"** is when Simon Peter is addressing the elders or pastors (I Pet. 5:1-4) of the Lord's churches of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (I Pet. 1:1). The word "pastor" and "shepherd" are synonymous in Scripture. The pastor or shepherd of a church of the Lord Jesus Christ is UNDER the Chief Shepherd. The Chief Shepherd is over all the flocks. Jesus is over all of His churches. He has one kind of church, but many churches. He is over all of them. He has graciously given unto His kind of church the office of a pastor, which is under Him, to lead them.

Let me put it this way: Where are shepherds in relation to the flock? Do shepherds walk behind the sheep with a "sheep-whip" snapping and cracking it to drive the sheep? Or, do shepherds walk in front of the flock leading them? The imagery that Christ used to describe the church, the pastor, and Himself is quite clear! The Lord Jesus is over all His churches. He has placed the office of pastor in the church; not above the church. He raises up men and supplies them with gifts suited for that church to lead them in the way the Lord would have them to go.

## PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF PROPER CHURCH GOVERNMENT:

There are two passages of Scripture that we want to note that bring out the Proper Church Government in the Lord's Church.

First, Acts 1:12-26—**"Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into**

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an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto the same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord which knowest the hearts of all

men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place, And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."

In this passage of Scripture, we have the first recorded business meeting of the Lord's church. All the principles and elements of the Lord's Church Government are brought out in this passage of Scripture. We will find Theocratic Government, Holy Spirit leadership in agreement with the written Word of God, the human leader in the church is leading the church by the Word of God, the majority of the church making the decision, and all the church submitting to the decision of the majority. Observe, that we see the Lord's church assembled together. There were about one hundred and twenty church members at this time (Acts 1:13-15). Please take note of their activities: **"these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."** Here we see that there was one accord in the church. This was a result of prayer and supplication by the church. Perhaps this is the source of many problems in the Lord's church(es) today, we are not in prayer and supplication. The ministers are not to be the only prayers. The membership is to be in prayer. If you are not praying specifically about spiritual matters, then begin today!

We find that Simon Peter stands up and addresses the Lord's church. As an apostle, Simon Peter was one of the first leaders in the church. We have already written that in our present day the pastor is to lead the church. Simon Peter leads the church with the Scriptures. Observe

that Simon Peter speaks of what the Holy Spirit moved David to record pertaining to Judas in the Psalms (Acts 1:16-20). Simon Peter is referencing Psalm 69:25—**"Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents"** and Psalm 109:8-15—**"Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labor. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD: and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let them be before the LORD continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth."** Simon Peter uses the written Word of God to lead the church in what they are supposed to do. He quotes and refers unto Scriptures. Simon Peter must have been in the Word, he must have been one who studied the Word of God, read the Word of God, and sought to rightly divide the Word of Truth. Now, whenever we use the Word of God, we are using Holy Spirit leadership. Remember, **"...holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"** (II Pet. 1:21). Simon Peter teaches us that it was the Holy Spirit who spake by the mouth of David these things (Acts 1:16).

Simon Peter is very intentional in the requirements of who should replace Judas. Acts 1:17 —**"For he [Judas] was numbered with us, and had obtained part of THIS MINISTRY"** [Emphasis is mine: NRH]. **"This ministry"** is very

specific. It is not "the ministry" but a specific ministry that not all were qualified for. Simon Peter lays down the qualifications in Acts 1:21-22—**"Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection."** In order to be nominated for Judas' replacement, these qualifications had to be met. Two men, who met these qualifications, were appointed as candidates for Judas' replacement (Acts 1:23). We are told that these two men were appointed by **"they"** (Acts 1:23). Either these were the only two who met those qualifications or these were those whom **"they"** or the **"one hundred and twenty"** appointed. If this were to happen today, a male member would stand up and motion for these two men to be nominated and another male member would second the motion. We then find that the church prayed. **"And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou has chosen, That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place"** (Acts 1:24, 25). The church prayed seeking the Lord to reveal His will; that He would reveal His choice for this ministry and apostleship. We do not read that the church discussed the matter between factions in the church. First of all there were not factions in the church because they were of **"one accord"** (Acts 1:14). We do not read where one church member looked to see who another church member was going to vote for. We read that they prayed and looked to Jesus.

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# Church Government

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Here we see the Lord's church submitting to the Theocratic government of Jesus Christ, the head of the church. Take note of how they gave Jesus the preeminent place in the church. Here they conducted themselves as Christ Jesus did, **"...nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt"** (Mark 14:36). Let every church member honestly ask themselves when it comes to the Lord's business in the Lord's church: "Am I seeking only His will?"

The next thing that we find is that **"they gave forth their lots."** Here the church voted as to whom they would appoint to this ministry and apostleship. Today, we "give forth our lots" by the raising of our hands. And each vote, of every church member was counted. The word **"they"** (Acts 1:26) is in reference unto the one hundred and twenty, which included the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus and with His brethren (Acts 1:14). I do not know when women were not allowed to vote in a business meeting, but it is quite clear that it was not the case in Acts 1. Every member has a vote. Every member ought to vote. No member ought to abstain from voting in the business meeting, but all are to cast forth their lots, or vote by show of hands.

We note that **"...the lot fell upon Matthias"** (Acts 1:26). The church voted that Matthias was to be the replacement for Judas. There was one vote. There was no "recounts" or "re-votes." There was **"the lot."** And we find that the whole church submitted unto the decision of the church, for it states: **"...and he [Matthias] was numbered with the eleven apostles"** (Acts 1:26). If there was a majority and a minority, we are never told. What we find is that **"the lot"** was accepted by all.

There is no Verse 27 where those who voted for Justus left the church and started their own church. We do not read where Justus threw a fit and never voted in the church again, or led an insurrection in the church. Rather, all submitted to the decision of the church. In fact, 30 years later, we do not read where it was brought up again. No one, and I reiterate, no one, held any animosity for Matthias being chosen unto this ministry. We see how the Lord's church submitted to God's Sovereignty. His purpose could not be thwarted. The Lord had chosen Matthias for this ministry and apostleship to replace Judas. The church took comfort that the Lord had showed of those two men who was His choice.

In this church business meeting, we find all the elements of the Lord's government in His church. We find the Lord reigning over His church, His church submitting to Him. The Lord's church being led by her leader(s) with the written Word of God and the Holy Spirit. We find prayer pertaining to the matter, and the congregation voting and the Lord's church submitting to the vote of the church.

Second, we find another business meeting held in Acts 15:1-32: **"And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they**

**were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.**

Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the

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# Church Government

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**multitude together; they delivered the epistle: Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation. And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words and confirmed them."**

In this passage of Scripture we find the very same things. We find the Lord Jesus having the preeminence, Holy Spirit leadership and the written Word of God, pastoral leadership, the whole church deciding, and submission to the decision of the church. This is the pattern of the Scriptures. The purpose for the meeting was circumcision. There were those who began to teach that you could not be saved or kept saved unless you were circumcised and kept the law of Moses (Acts 15:1, 5). The church at Antioch sent Paul, Barnabas, and certain others up to the church at Jerusalem where apostles and elders were (Acts 15:2). There was great discussion upon this matter. Simon Peter gave testimony of the grace of God to the Gentiles through his ministry (Acts 15:7-11); Paul and Barnabas did the same (Acts 15:12).

We then find James standing up (Acts 15:13). I believe that James was the pastor of the church at Jerusalem. We find him acting as the moderator of the meeting, to say the least. James speaks of the testimony of Simeon or Simon Peter which was given in verses 7-11. Observe, that James does not go by Simon Peter's experience alone. Rather, James interprets Simon Peter's experience by the Word of God. James states that the prophets had previously declared what took place when Simon Peter preached to the Gentiles. James refers to Amos 9:11-12—"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle

of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this." Take note: "...and of all the heathen [or Gentiles], WHICH ARE CALLED BY MY NAME, SAITH THE LORD THAT DOETH THIS" [Emphasis is NRH]. James saw in the Old Testament, that the Holy Spirit spoke by men of old that the "LORD" would save a people by His name out of the Gentiles.

James then gives his sentence, or recommendation, as to how to proceed from here (Acts 15:19-21). James' recommendation was based upon the written Word of God. In fact, James quoted Scriptures in a church business meeting. He led the church, or ruled the church, with the Word of God. All mouths were stopped. There was no more disputing, no more questioning. It was not James that had put all to silence, but the Scriptures. It was not James who had the preeminence in the church, but the Lord Jesus Christ.

We then find the Lord's church in agreement with James' recommendation (Acts 15:22). Nothing was done outside of the Lord's church. The apostles were not operating independent of the Lord's Church. We find that the Lord's church was in agreement with James' sentence. And so they should have been, for it was based upon the Word of God. James was not infallible; but the Word of God is! And so the Lord's Church could have confidence in James' leadership and his sentence because it was based upon and came out of the Word of God. The church sent out letters showing the decision that was made (Acts 15:23-29).

We then observe the effects of doing things the way of the Lord (Acts 15:30-32). When this letter was read in Antioch, the news produced something very specific: rejoicing (Acts 15:31). We are told in Galatians 5:22—that joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit. This was not ordinary joy of the flesh, but rejoicing produced by the Holy Spirit. These here were rejoicing in the Lord. They were not under the yoke of the Law, but under free-grace. They had been saved and were now free to serve the Lord as He dictated.

All the elements are here. In Acts 1 and Acts 15 we see Christ having the preeminence in His church, Holy Spirit leadership and the written Word of God being followed, leaders of the Lord's church (pastors) actually leading the church by the written Word of God, and the church of the Lord submitting to God's Word. This will produce joy of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We see here that the government of the Lord's church is Theocratic. The Lord is in charge. Yet, it is to be carried out in a democratic way. Further, the Pastor is to lead the church with the written Word of God. When someone asks why we, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, conduct the Lord's business in such a way, it is because this is the pattern of the Scriptures. There is no other pattern given unto us. How can we deviate from the Word of God? If we did not follow this pattern it would be tantamount to Moses not building the tabernacle like the pattern God showed him in the mount. We must follow what God has laid down in His Word.

We, who are pastors of the Lord's church, must return to the practice of leading by the written Word of God. There is a generation rising

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## BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

### Financial Report

12-1-2018 to 12-31-2018

Beginning Balance .....	\$591.59
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL .....	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX .....	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV .....	200.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	150.00
Carol Willett, Edgewater, FL .....	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL .....	25.00
Davenport B. C., Davenport, WA .....	160.00
Dr. Eve Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....	100.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY .....	200.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR .....	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	200.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC .....	50.00
Grace Landmark B. C., Buckhannon, WV ..	36.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK .....	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV .....	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC .....	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY .....	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH .....	100.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR ..	200.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR .....	50.00
Rolan Rhodes, Buckhannon, WV .....	4.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS .....	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX .....	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....	25.00
Subscriptions .....	140.00
Anonymous .....	1,210.00
Dividing checks .....	150.00
Sub Total .....	\$3,892.50
TOTAL .....	\$4,484.09
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Printing .....	490.00
Postage .....	494.33
Wages .....	2,300.00
FICA .....	175.96
Dividing checks .....	150.00
Bank Charge .....	13.00
Total Expenditures .....	\$3,623.29
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$860.80



## BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

### Financial Report

12-1-2018 to 12-31-2018

Beginning Balance .....	\$1,700.31
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	225.00
Briar Creek, Williamsburg, KY .....	100.00
Calvary I. B. C., Sumas, WA .....	100.00
Grace B.C., Corbin, KY .....	200.00
.....	625.00
TOTAL .....	2,325.31
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Radio Time .....	363.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....	363.98
Interest .....	+0.01
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$1,961.34



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Elder Jimmie Bryan Davis, 87, left his earthly home to be with his Lord and Savior in Heaven on Wednesday, January 9, 2019.



He was born April 26, 1931, in Nauvoo, AL, one of nine children of the 80 year marriage of Claude Bryan Davis and Lula Norris Davis. Bro. Jimmie, as most people called him, was called to preach at age 16. He was pastor of Southside Baptist Church and Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Fulton, MS for several years while serving as pastor of Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church in Fayette, AL, for 58 years. He would preach at Mt. Lebanon at 8:30 on Sunday mornings and drive back to Fulton to preach at 11:00 a.m. He also shared the gospel of Christ on local radio and television broadcasts. After retiring at the age of 85 years young, Bro. Jimmie still preached from time to time up until his death. He was a member of Union Grove Baptist Church of Tilden, MS. While faithfully following the Lord's will in delivering the word of God, he still kept a big garden without one blade of grass in it. Bro. Jimmie married the love of his life, Betty Glover, in 1951, and together they had three loving daughters, six grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

Elder Davis was a forum writer for the *Berea Baptist Banner* from 1980 until 2003.

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

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Elder Clyde Francis Hancock, age 86, of Allen, KY, husband of the late Edith Cline Hancock, passed away Thursday, January 3, 2019 at the

Riverview Health Care Center, Prestonsburg, KY. He was born September 26, 1932 in Printer, KY. He was a member of the Riverside Baptist Church, a retired pastor, retired from the US Army, and a Kentucky Colonel.



Funeral services were conducted Sunday, January 6, 2019 at 1 p.m. at the Hall Funeral Home Chapel with Elder Mark Clark officiating.

**"...blessed are the dead which die in the Lord..."** (Rev. 14:13).

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Elder Jon H. Rule, pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church of Ashland, KY, departed this life on January 8, 2019, at the age of 79. Funeral services were held at Zion Baptist Church of Taylor, MI.



**"and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord"** (II Cor. 5:8).

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

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

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

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

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

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

2929.

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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.



## Church Government

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up, yea is already risen up, who is going by traditions and not by the written Word of God. We must teach the next generation that the Lord is the Head of the church, the pastor is to lead the church, and the church has authority to carry out what God's Word already states under Holy Spirit leadership.

Many people do not realize that the church business meeting is worship! It is just as much worship as singing, preaching, teaching, baptisms, observance of the Lord's Supper. And we would not dare deviate from God's Word on those matters. Let us not deviate from God's Word on His church government and business.

The next time that you are going to recommend something to the church you pastor, find a verse in the Bible that says to do it, quote that verse or verses to the church, and then give your recommendation. You that are brethren in the Lord's church, before you make a motion to do something, make sure there is a verse in the Bible that supports your motion, read it, and then make your motion.

May we all seek to have Christ in His proper place, the preeminent place, as the Head of the church in all things. **"Let all things be done decently and in order"** (I Cor. 14:40). Maranatha. AMEN.



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