

A Beseeching for the New Year

By Nathaniel Hille
of Caldwell, Kansas

As the apostle Paul "beseeched" the saints of God throughout his epistles to do many things, we do now beseech you in the same spirit to read the Scriptures through this year. Jesus urged those of His day to **"Search the scriptures"** (John 5:39). We know of the famed Bereans who **"received the word with all readiness of mind,**



and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts.17:11). And so we beseech you to take up the reading of the Scriptures in a way that you will

read all 66 books annually!
BENEFITS TO READING

SCRIPTURES ANNUALLY

1. Feed Your Soul and Spirit:
"That he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth to the LORD doth man live" (Deut. 8:3). Beloved, you and I are very good at feeding our physical bodies daily. I dare say that we have probably never gone a day

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Phebe, A Christ-like Servant

By Timothy J. Hille
of Ashland, Illinois

Romans 16:1-2

We have a great need in this hour of those who will cheerfully give themselves to be servants in the house of the Lord. We read in our text



of one who was commended, and was to be received **"in the Lord,"** by the church of God at Rome because of her Christ-like service to the church at Cenchrea. She yielded her life to the business of God. She was like Christ, who said, **"I must be about my Father's business"** (Luke 2:49); and, **"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work"** (John 9:4). How much our church and other churches of like faith and order would be profited if we had in our membership a Phebe, or even a multitude of Phebes, we cannot tell!

We can deduce from our text that Phebe was a member of the church at Cenchrea, and she was traveling on church business. It is possible that she was entrusted with this very epistle which Paul wrote to the Roman saints, and carried it there. Her church letter of commendation

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Keys to Reading the Bible in a Year

By Todd Bryant
of Northport, Alabama

First of all, I cannot begin to express the benefits that have been mine over the past several years as I have read through God's Word annually. Private time with our Lord and His Word are of the utmost importance for every child of God. Oftentimes, we have a tendency to only study



small portions of Scripture or certain doctrines. That can sometimes skew our overall "viewpoint" and understanding of the Bible as a whole.

Having read through the Bible each year for several years now, I have come to see

that there are several important keys to finishing this project. This short article will outline the principles that will guide you through this enriching journey.

First of all, you must commit to this. I have witnessed numerous people... good solid Christian people...that have begun reading through the Bible and did not make it a month. It takes

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The Incarnation of the Christ The Day When God Became A Man

By Andy Proctor
of Winston-Salem, North Carolina

John 1:1-14

Before I begin let me define the word, "incarnation," because I empathize with those who may not grasp the meaning of this word. I remember coming to my first Bible Conference here, and constantly hearing the word, "Arminian," and



having no clue what the preachers were talking about exactly; I knew it was not very good by the denunciations and tone of voice used when speaking of "Arminians." I recall Peter Halliman mentioning it at that conference back

in 1983, and wondering if it was the way people from Kentucky describe those from Armenia near Turkey, but I did not make any connection with them being particularly scandalous people.

Anyway, "carnis" is late Latin word from which means flesh and where we get the word, carnivorous (flesh-eating), carnal (fleshly), and a number

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If we begin each day with a bit of Scripture reading, we might join with the prophet Isaiah and say,
"The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned" (Isaiah 50:4).

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

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Phebe, A Christ-like

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by which she was to be received into the fellowship of the Roman church was this portion of Paul's apostolic letter to that church, which in itself signifies the high spiritual esteem in which she was held by Paul and the church at Cenchrea of which she was a member. She is, if nothing else, an example in the Scriptures of how one church is to commend her members unto another church of like faith and order to be admitted into their fellowship and membership when moving from place to place. Thanks be to God, she is much more than that, though all we know of her is what we read in these two verses! Would to God that if all that was ever recorded about our lives was a mere sentence or two, it should be of such spiritual worth and import as this brief notice which is given to Sister Phebe here in God's Holy Word! I daresay we should have cause for rejoicing in the day of judgment before Christ's judgment seat if the character of our Christian lives and the proof of our faithful service merited such notice as is here given on account of this dear sister.

Phebe exemplified in her walk as a disciple of the Lord many Christ-like qualities. First of all, we see that she was **"a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea."** The word for servant in our text is said to be the same term as "deacon," for which cause many have attempted to say that women should be ordained and churches should have "deaconesses," for which there is no Scripture warrant. The qualifications for a deacon given in God's Word exclude a woman by their very nature; yet, a woman is never excluded from serving God in a scriptural way. Sad, is it not, that people want to be said to serve God, but yet persist in doing their own will and not His as revealed in the Scriptures! Was that the way of Christ? Does the Scripture call Christ a servant of God, and yet Christ did those things which pleased Himself rather than those things which pleased the One who sent Him to perform His service (John 8:29)? When someone says, "Well, I think women can preach as well as

men;" that person is thinking in his or her heart, but not acknowledging, "I think my thoughts are better than God's thoughts." When people claim to serve God, but do not do what God says but instead do their own sayings, they manifest that they are workers of iniquity and not workers with God. The yoke they bear is not the yoke of Christ, and the master they serve is not Christ (Matt. 7:21-27). A man may build a great house of religious works upon this earth, but if it be built on any foundation other than obedience to God's Word, it shall fall: and great shall be the fall of it! The term for **"servant"** means, "one who executes the commands of another," (Online Bible Greek-English Lexicon), and comes from a term meaning "to run on errands" (Strong's Concordance - Greek Lexicon). Is that not the very thing we see Phebe doing in these verses, running the errand of the church at Cenchrea, and even of Paul the apostle? She was a servant sent to do her Master's business.

Phebe was a servant of the church of God. She had given herself to serve the church. Her business was to do the church's business. Her concern was to be occupied with and see to the concerns of the church. Her care was the cares of the church. Her work was the needs and requirements of the church. She was no longer her own, but was a servant. Her life was not given to pleasure, self-will, self-honor, self-advancement, or personal accomplishment. Her life was given to Christ in and through His kind of church. We see a glimpse of her life here at this time. She was traveling on church business. She was serviceable to the gospel, the ministry of the Word, and the church of God. She regarded not herself as her own, but as being bought with a price; and therefore she sought to glorify God with her body and her spirit, which were God's. She was not too busy to do her Lord's bidding. She did not become entangled with other business so that it hindered her from doing her Lord's business.

We see an eminent Christ-likeness in Phebe, for she imitated her Lord, Savior, Master, and Head, by imitating His servant's mind and life (Phil. 2:5-8). The reason that many

cannot be servants is because they do not have a servant's mind. To serve another's pleasure, to submit to another's desire, to work for another's honor and glory, conflicts with their own sinful, wicked, foolish, devilish pride. They fail to see the honor and dignity and reward of serving a great Master, an honorable and mighty King, a faithful and wise Householder; and so they dishonor themselves in serving the lusts of the flesh and of the mind, and exercise themselves in sin rather than in righteousness. Christ, though He was equal with God the Father, did not consider Himself robbed to humble Himself and take upon Himself the form of a servant. When He came as Man to save man, He did not come as a mighty King, though He is King of kings. He did not come forth in the form of a rich, or powerful, or great man, but in the lowliest form, a servant. He came forth with nothing and He has inherited all things. He emptied Himself and He shall fill all things and is the sum and completion of all things, and all things find their fulfillment in Him. He humbled Himself, and He is exalted. Phebe had the meek and lowly mind of Christ. She was not interested in her own reputation, or honor, but sought honor through her Master and Lord. She did not think it robbery to serve others her equals, but esteemed them better than herself in her own sight and sought their welfare, their enrichment, their profit, and their honor, rather than her own. In so doing, she shall obtain an incorruptible crown of righteousness. She shall receive the reward of a servant of Christ, a better resurrection, a robe of white, and a crown of life.

As a servant, we find that Phebe was faithful. She was entrusted with the highest business on earth, the business of the church of the living God. A man, woman, boy, or girl is in honor to a large degree in this life because of that with which they are entrusted. Some men are entrusted with little. Jesus said, **"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much"** (Luke 16:10). If you

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WATERING THE TULIPS



By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama



Simply Believe

“And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:30-31).

The Philippian jailor asked the most important question of all time. This man had guarded the cell and heard Paul and Silas “praying and singing hymns” along with all of the prisoners (Acts 16:25). Without doubt, the Holy Spirit had convicted this man that he was a sinner in need of a place of refuge from the wrath of God. In despair, he asked Paul and Silas, **“what must I do to be saved?”** His concern certainly was not for his physical life. Paul and Silas gave him an answer that would have put his physical life at jeopardy, as it had theirs. His concern was a spiritual one. He desired to be saved from his sins. Simply, they responded, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”** The question of the ages was answered with a simple answer.

The answer to this question certainly varies from person to person and congregation to congregation these days. Some may say, “this man was already saved.” Yet, this man clearly realized he was **“dead in trespasses and sins”** (Eph. 2:1). He desired to be delivered from his sins and the penalty of them. Some may say, “Belief is not enough for even the devil and his angels believe.” But oh, Jesus did not die for angels. He died for humans. He is our kinsman Redeemer. And furthermore, this Scripture clearly says otherwise, **“Believe on the**

Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” There is no place for doubt. “You will be saved.”

Jesus said as much when talking with Nicodemus. He said, **“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God”** (John 3:18). Simply, the believer is saved and the unbeliever is lost. This simple truth can never be contracted by deeper “truths.” If it is, our deeper “truths” are wrong. As in math, 2+2=4 no matter how deep the math may go. So, no matter how deep the doctrine may be, the simple truths in God’s Word always remain true. The believer is saved... the unbeliever is condemned.

Why is the unbeliever condemned? Simply, he refuses God’s **“door”** by which the sheep must enter. Jesus said, **“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture”** (John 10:9). God’s gift to mankind is salvation through the finished work of Christ on the cross. He is the door into fellowship with God. And yet, man in his natural state constantly shakes his fist at God and His way and strives to get to Heaven some other route. Man naturally seeks to find God through the broad way that **“leadeth to destruction”** (Matt. 7:13). But, Paul and Silas pointed this man to the “narrow gate” which most refuse to enter. In fact, Jesus said **“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it”** (Matt. 7:14).

Child of God, this world is full of condemned souls that refuse God’s way. Men are striving to find harmony with God in every way except through God’s prescribed manner. Works and ceremonial religion are man’s natural inclinations. Yet, God’s way is simple, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”** Oh, that we will not corrupt **“the simplicity that is in Christ”** (II Cor. 11:3).



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cannot be trusted with things of small importance, who will trust you with things of great importance and worth? It is an honor to be accounted faithful; and it is the highest honor to be faithful unto God. A servant must prove faithful or be cast out of his or her service (Heb. 3:1-6). Moses was a faithful servant of God. Christ was more faithful and faithful in a greater sense. Moses had the faithfulness of a servant. Christ served as a faithful son. Who has more interest in the house, the servant who serves the Master of the house; or the Son whose house it is by inheritance? The Son has more interest and care for the house than even the most faithful servant, because the house is His, belongs to Him, and shall be His to own and possess as the Master of the house one day. Phebe had Christ-like faithfulness. She was more than a mere servant; she was a member of the household in which she served. She served in a greater capacity and with greater care than even a most faithful servant; she served with the care and zeal of a daughter of the house. She owned the business of God’s house as being her own business, in which she had the greatest interest, and about which she was careful that her Heavenly Father should be rendered all the honor, glory, and blessing due Him.

To be a Christ-like servant, we must not serve as hired servants, merely working for wages; but as Christ, we must serve as members of the household and family of God, as sons and daughters, as heirs and joint-heirs of God with Christ. Our service is not to be for gain, but for love’s sake. How happy is the loving son to fulfill the Heavenly Father’s pleasure! How happy is the daughter to receive the smile of the Heavenly Father upon her work! Servants we are to be sure, if Christ has bought us and redeemed us unto Himself; and yet He calls us not servants, but friends, brethren, and shows us all His mind and all that His Father has spoken and given unto Him as the Son of the Highest. You never served such a Master to be sure until you served Christ! He honors us with His own honor. He enriches us

with His own riches. Who would not serve such a Lord and Master! How much our zeal and faithfulness ought to commend Him to all we meet!

We see Phebe also exemplified Christ-likeness in the manner in which she served the churches of God. **“She hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.”** The term “succor” means, in its most basic sense, help or relief. She had provided assistance and relief to others. She had come to their aid when they were overborne, and that right away and most zealously. The term implies swiftness to come and bring relief. How like Christ, who, as the Good Samaritan, comes to our aid when we are half-dead and have none to help! He sees us, has compassion on us, and comes to help us and relieve us and bear the burden of our recovery! Such an one was Phebe. Her heart was not cold or hard or indifferent. She was not unaffected by the trials and infirmities of others because of her own cares; but rather yearned for the members of the household of God, and sought to do good unto all men, especially unto those who were of the household of faith. She had helped many by stooping to put her shoulder under their burden, and thus fulfill the law of Christ; and Paul confessed that she had succored him as well.

The term **“succourer”** in our text is said to come from a term meaning “patroness.” This term refers to a woman set over others as a protector or guardian: “a female guardian, protectress, patroness, caring for the affairs of others and aiding them with her resources.” (Online Bible Greek-English Lexicon). She used her money, her time, her talents, her energy, and her abilities to help others in need of aid. She brought relief and protection to those who without her help would fail or fall. Sad, is it not, that people today think that the only way they can have honor is to be the boss of someone else, rather than being the servant of someone else (Matt. 20:20-28)! Jesus clearly indicated that in His kingdom the place of highest honor is not the place of highest personal esteem, the place of highest prominence, or the place of highest position and fame;

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but rather it is the place of lowliest service and self-denial. Phebe took upon herself and was officially given the responsibility of the care of other children of God. Many today want to say that the churches which believe the Bible have no place of service for women because they will not ordain women, or permit them to preach, or have them as officers in the church. Sadly, they would deny women the place of greatest Christ-like service and subsequent honor and glory at Christ's appearing, the place of **"succourer of many"** by being **"a servant of the church."** People today do not want to serve unless they can have a title, a position, a wage, a badge, an honor from men. Jesus said that such are not even capable of being believers (John 5:44).

In Mark 9:30-50, Christ had been talking about His crucifixion, His laying down His life for us, His bearing our sins and burdens at the cross; and the disciples had been arguing about which one of them was the greatest. Some shall not receive a reward, but shall be cast into hell-fire; for their seeming service is nothing but self-serving hypocrisy and the seeking of earthly reward and men's applause and honor. Do not lose your Christ-like saltiness, so that your service has no savor with God. Do not follow the devil in the sin of pride, but humble yourself to serve even a child if he or she be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I would consider some practicalities. Phebe's service was practical – it was real and zealous. How is it possible to render service to others without being resentful? When others do not show appreciation for what we do, or speak ill of our hard labor from which they and others benefit, or merely ignore our service altogether? First of all, we must not serve to be seen of men. Our service, if it be not to God and for His pleasing, is not fit for one who names the name of Christ. Did Christ serve God in order to receive the applause of men, which in reality makes one to be a servant of men rather than God; or did He serve God in truth, ignoring the shame and reproach – counting

it nothing in respect to the reward of faithful service – and rejoicing in God and in God's service? Secondly, we must serve from the heart, willingly and cheerfully. Would you be glad to have done service no matter how it was received if you knew according to God's Word that it was the service you ought to have rendered? There are souls in heaven that were put to death for the cause of Christ, and they have not as yet received their full and final reward, because they are waiting for us to finish our courses. Should we say to them, "Why, you should be dissatisfied and discontented to be resting from your labors for so long! You should be desirous of a fleeting temporal reward and feel begrudged!" I trow not! God loveth a cheerful giver; and cheerful givers love to give to God, whether they are giving money, time, talents, energy, ability, zeal, blood, or all. Thirdly, you must ever look to Christ if you would imitate His servant's heart and mind and life (Heb. 12:1-3). We have many witnesses witnessing to us that to hold fast in faith to the way of life and light, walking by faith and not by sight, living as strangers and pilgrims on the earth, seeking a better country – that is, an heavenly – is worth more

than all the world; but we have only one way to do so, by looking unto Jesus as our example, our guide, our captain, and the beginner and completer – yea, the beginning and the end – of our faith.

Would you be like Christ? Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him. He is meek and lowly in heart. Ye shall find rest unto your souls.



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wherein we did not feed our physical stomachs something. Sadly, we do often starve our souls and spirits from the spiritual nourishment we so stand in need of. The psalmist David wrote, **"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth"** (Ps. 119:103)! Here the psalmist uses the analogy of eating the Word of God and describes it as being sweeter than honey.

Many children of God only "eat" the Scriptures a couple times a week (Sunday and Wednesday). Others, will pick up the Bible and read a few passages here and there scrounging around looking at verses here and there like a bum picking through garbage. Few, however, sit down and partake of the feast which God has bidden us to come to daily!

What would happen if we ate our physical food the way in which we "eat" our spiritual food? I dare say that many of us would starve! Some would only eat on Sundays and Wednesdays and not very well on those two days. Some would eat scraps here and there throughout the week. But if we will sit down with the Word of God and "feast" upon the Scriptures daily we shall grow spiritually. We shall appear like Daniel and the Hebrew children who **"at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat"** (Dan. 1:15).

2. Your pastor will start preaching better or not: **"Preach the word"** (II Tim. 4:2). I promise you that one of two things will happen when you start reading the Scriptures daily. Either you will find out that your pastor is NOT preaching **"Thus saith the LORD"** or he will become

a greater preacher of God's Word.

That MAN has labored for your soul in prayer and in preaching (Heb. 13:17). His sermons are "scriptural," but they are just not what you "need." Well, beloved, I beseech you for your pastor's sake. If you will:

(a) take up the reading of the Scriptures, feasting upon them daily

(b) read portions of Scripture, so that you will finish all the Bible by the end of the year

(c) jot down some notes or some questions you have, even inquiring with your pastor about those questions

(d) writing some interesting things down that appeared to you in Scripture

(e) memorizing verses that you find the Holy Spirit seemed to highlight on the written page as you read them

... then your pastor will begin to preach better.

His sermons will be more suitable to your palate. They shall roll around your taste buds like a savory morsel of chocolate. They shall be easily digested like the first foods of an infant, going forth throughout the soul and spirit supplying that which every joint lacks and needs.

3. There may be a revival: **"And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it"** (II Kings 22:8). This portion of Scripture took place during the reign of King Josiah. I implore you to read this life of Josiah and see the revival that took place under his reign as king over Judah. It all began when they found the Word of God in the House of the LORD.

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chron. 7:14).

This verse is often connected with revival, and rightly so. Beloved, there will be no returning to God, save we do not return to His written Word when we return to Him. Maranatha! AMEN.



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Keys to Reading the

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dedication but it is not as much as one may think. The actual reading takes 15-20 minutes daily. I have a tendency to reread passages and yet I am always done in less than 30 minutes. You must realize, nothing in life can benefit you like the reading of God's Word. For less than the time of one sitcom daily, you can read through God's Word this year. Can you not sacrifice this small amount of time daily for the One Who gave all for you?

Secondly, do not be random. Read in the same place and at the same time every day. This is critical to making sure it is done. Reading God's Word must be part of your daily routine. I have friends that do this at night just before going to bed and it works great for them. Personally, I read every morning with a cup of coffee. If something ever happens (and certainly it does), I make a point to read as soon as possible so I am not off track. This reading is part of my daily routine just like brushing my teeth.

Thirdly, decide now what method you plan to use. There are a number of ways to read through God's Word. I have used the *One Year Bible* twice and it is a great daily Bible. It divides the Scripture into 365 readings. In 2014, they have even released a chronological version which I plan to use this coming year. With these, one starts on January 1 and reads daily through December 31 and he will have read through the Bible. There are several websites that will actually email you daily portions of Scripture that will work you through the Bible in a year. There are a number of charts that you can use as a checklist to read daily. There certainly is a way that suits you. You just need to figure out which one is best.

If possible, make this journey with other people – preferably other church members. This will give you something to talk about with one another. You can also hold one another accountable. There is strength in numbers. Having a friend (or friends) to commit to this with will help you stick with it.

Lastly, you are going to have some

days that things happen and you just do not read. Never...under any circumstances...get more than 2 days behind. There is a point mentally when you will give up if you get too far behind. Do not let this happen. Try your best to stay caught up. But, let 2 days be your maximum amount behind. When you hit this point, read 1 ½ days worth of reading until you are caught back up.

You can do this. And, you will wonder why you did not start it years ago once you finish. Lord willing, I will do this for the rest of my life. It has been a great benefit to me and the church here. I hope these few tips can help you feel the same way in years to come.

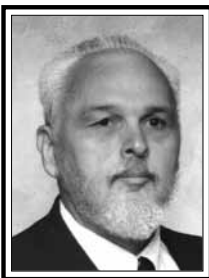


Figures of Speech in Your Bible

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

This article is not meant to be an English lesson, but every Bible believer ought to be aware that there are figures of speech in the Word of God. If we are to be students of the Bible, we must also be students of the language in which we read God's Word. We must know the definition of words and be able to understand the plain language of the Bible if we are to study it and know what it says. If we do not read God's Word with understanding we cannot rightly divide it properly. Remember Paul's words: **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"** (II Tim. 2:15). It will be admitted by all students of God's Word that **"much study is a weariness of the flesh"** (Eccl. 12:12). Being a student of God's Word is not for a lazy person! It takes steady, energetic and earnest effort.

This preacher believes and preaches



that the Bible is to be believed and obeyed literally. One of the miracles of the Bible is that God superintended its writing so that His Word was written down in the vocabulary and style of the men whom He employed to write it. In the Personal Word, the Lord Jesus, we have a magnificent union of the human with the divine. So it is with the written Word. There are no faults or blemishes in either of them. But this does not mean that those who penned God's Word did not make use of literary devices. There are figures of speech in the Bible. For instance there are parables in the Bible. The Bible says so. A parable is a figure of speech. It is either an extended (longer than usual) simile or metaphor. A metaphor is a figure of speech which compares two different things by saying that one is the other. In simpler words, a metaphor compares two objects or things without using the words "like" or "as." It is easy to spot a simile because it uses the words "as," "like," "than," or a verb like "resembles." In our King James Bible a parable which is a simile is often introduced with the words "like unto." For instance, in Matthew 13:33 & 44 we have two parables introduced this way. In one place we read that **"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven,"** and in the other we read, **"the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field."** The Bible does not say that the kingdom of heaven is either leaven or a treasure. It does not say that at all. It says the kingdom of heaven is "like unto" these two things. By means of these comparisons we learn about the kingdom of heaven from what we know or can learn about yeast and treasures.

It must be noted here, for the sake of a complete view, that parables were spoken by the Lord Jesus not only to profit His sheep, but for another reason as well. A thoughtful reading of Matthew 13:10-16 teaches that parables were spoken by the Lord to hide the truth from those not His sheep. Unregenerate persons can hear and read parables and tell you what was said, but the point is that they, having fat hearts, dull ears, and closed eyes cannot and do not understand them in a spiritually profitable way. They are not

benefitted spiritually from what they hear or read. Of course this truth concerning parables fits in completely with the Bible doctrines of election and reprobation, both of which are so hated by the modern religionist whatever his denominational label.

And with the introduction of the word "sheep" in the last paragraph, we have introduced the next figure of speech to consider: a metaphor. The Bible is full of metaphors. A metaphor is when one thing is said to be another. Jesus said, **"I am the door,"** meaning He was the doorway or opening. He was and is not that literally, but in a figure. He said, **"I am the way,"** but He was not and is not a literal highway. He said that He is both **"the root and the offspring of David"** as well as **"the bright and morning star,"** but these are metaphors. He said **"ye are my sheep,"** but His saints are not sheep of the four-legged variety. He spoke of those **"which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves,"** but He did not mean literal sheepskins nor did He mean that they had inside them literal wolves. Every honest person must admit that there are figures of speech in the Bible.

Someone said that there are hundreds of figures of speech in the Bible. Some of them may be regarded as "expressions," such as understatements. An understatement is another figure of speech. We use understatements in our everyday speech. They make speech and writing colorful and interesting. For instance, we might say of a very old man, "He is a little old." If asked about the food in a certain resaurant we might say, "I wouldn't say the food was great." These are understatements. After Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights the Bible says, **"he was afterward an hungred."** Probably that is an understatement. Proverbs 20:23 says, **"Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good."** After saying that diverse weights (those two sets of weights used by a dishonest merchant: heavier ones for weighing purchases and lighter ones for weighing sales) are something that God views as

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horrible, disgusting and hated. To then add **“and a false balance is not good”** is an understatement. Understatements are used to give emphasis. By understating the case, attention is called to the thing stated in that way.

Next, consider the figure of speech we call hyperbole. Now we must be careful, studious and thoughtful here. To use hyperbole is to use obvious exaggeration in order to emphasize what is said. The keyword is obvious. Usually we think that an exaggeration is a lie, but in both speech and writing this kind of figure of speech is common. Someone might be describing a person who was either drunk or on dope by saying, “That guy was as high as a kite.” Now we do not jump up and say to the speaker, “You’re a liar! He was not as high as a kite.” We understand he is using hyperbole – a figure of speech which we may describe as using an “expression.” Another example might be a birthday party. We might say to someone who did not attend, “We missed you! Everybody was there!” Is the speaker lying? No, it is hyperbole: a figure of speech. Obviously the statment “everybody was there” is untrue, but is used to emphasize that a large number of people were there – perhaps a large number of a certain class or kind of people such as friends and family. So it is in the Bible. In Deuteronomy 1:28 we read **“the cities are great and walled up to heaven.”** Now we all know that there never was a city wall that reached up to heaven. It is an obvious exaggeration. The meaning of the hyperbole here is that the walls were very high. In Judges 20:16 we read: **“Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss.”** Obviously, at a target distance a hair would not even be visible, nor would they be able to always hit something the width of a hair. The meaning is that these seven hundred left-handed men were extremely accurate with their slings.

Here is another hyperbole. In Colossians 1:23 the Paul said, **“If ye**

continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.” Are we to believe that Paul meant that literally **“every creature which is under heaven”** had heard the gospel? Or is he using hyperbole for emphasis? When he wrote this, he had not yet been everywhere that he would go. He had not yet, for instance, gone into Spain. Since his goal was always to preach where Christ had not been preached before, why was he anxious to go to Spain? He wrote in Romans 15:20: **“Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation.”** In verses 24 and 28 of that same chapter he wrote of his determination to travel to Spain. Why was he so determined to go there if the gospel had already been preached to every living person there? What about the people outside the Roman Empire? What about those people we call American Indians? And those who inhabited the far-flung islands of the sea? And those “down under?” Is there any evidence that Paul and his peers had preached the gospel to every living person when he wrote the Colossian letter from his Roman imprisonment? We conclude that Paul used hyperbole, an obvious exaggeration, in this verse. He did it to emphasize the great number of people who had been evangelized. There are other instances of hyperbole in the Bible, but this is sufficient to indicate the use of this kind of literary device.

Let us consider briefly one more figure of speech: the allegory. An allegory is a literary device in which characters or events, real or fictitious, represent or symbolize ideas and concepts. The Bible specifically states

that the historical account of Isaac, Hagar and Rebecca is an allegory. This does not mean they were not real people and that the account given of their lives is not true. It means that God so ordained their lives as to be a picture of something else. That such a thing could be is a demonstration of the absolute sovereignty of God! Only a sovereign God could so engineer the events of history and of personal lives so as to make them a picture of such a great spiritual truth. Here is what the Bible says **“Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all”** (Gal. 4:22-26).

Let us consider three things briefly about this allegory. First the writer clearly states **“Which things are an allegory.”** Paul does not use the allegorical method of Bible interpretation. He does not deny the fact that these people and events were real, historical figures. He does not change them into something that they were not. But what he says is this: these historical persons and their experiences represent or symbolize something else. They represent law and grace: bondage to the law and freedom from the law.

The second thing here is that there were some people who wanted to be **“under the law.”** In our day we

have some folk who all have the same desire. They are prone to try and divide the law of God. Some speak of the ceremonial law and the moral law. They really only want to keep certain parts of the Old Testament. But the Bible itself does not make a difference between the “moral law” and the “ceremonial law.” In the Bible the “law” or “Old Testament” is a unit. In fact, here Paul says some want to be **“under the law”** and then asks if these people do not **“hear the law.”** Now where in the so-called ceremonial law does that part of the Old Testament speak of Isaac, Hagar and Rebecca? It does not! Well, then, where in the moral law does that part of the Old Testament speak of these people? It does not! We find the account of these people in the historical books which are not regarded as either “ceremonial law” or “moral law.” We do a disservice to God’s Word when we make artificial divisions in it. Paul addresses those who want to be **“under the law”** - i.e. the Old Testament. How do we know this? Because he goes on to say, **“do ye not hear the law”** - i.e. the Old Testament. We cannot say that the word “law” in the first instance means one things and the word “law” in the second place means something else! Paul is referring to the whole Old Testament. Anybody who is under even one part of the Old Testament, i.e. the “law,” is under obligation to keep the whole Old Testament. God said so: **“For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law”** (Gal. 5:3). We remind the reader that in Luke 16:16 the Lord Jesus said, **“The law and the prophets were until John...”** This means that the whole Old Testament system ended with John the Baptist. What else can it mean?

Perhaps it should be stated here that the Bible says there is a lawful use of the law in 1 Timothy 1:8. If there is a lawful use of the law, there must be an unlawful use or uses of the law also. The purpose of the law is clearly stated in Romans 3:20: **“...by the law is the knowledge of sin.”** Let this preacher make a bold statement here for your consideration: since the fall of Adam, if a person were able to

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keep the whole law perfectly he or she would not be one whit righteous in God's eyes. Why, because if the person keeping the law was unregenerate, he is incapable of doing anything to please God (see Romans 8:7-8). Besides that, for all his law-keeping, he could not undo the evil done by father Adam. If the person keeping the law was regenerate he cannot add to the righteousness already imputed to him. We say that because it is written: **"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth"** (Rom. 10:4). The purpose of the law was not and is not to provide men with a means of being righteous in God's eyes. That lawkeeping accumulates righteousness is the basis of works mongering. No one has ever been righteous because of lawkeeping! Hear this: whoever keeps the whole law (Old Testament) and yet sins in one point is guilty of all (James 2:10). And conversely, whoever is justified through faith and by the blood of Jesus Christ has righteousness imputed to him – and that means this: no sin is put down on his account. Romans 4:8 says, **"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."** Not only are those justified credited with righteousness, no sin is credited to their account either! God does not use a sliding scale to determine righteousness. God does not, like some schoolteachers, "grade on the curve." His standard of holiness is absolute. (There can be no such thing as partial holiness. That is like saying something is "partially pure.") Not only is His standard of holiness absolute, but His provision of holiness (justification) is absolute and complete as well. And it does not come about by keeping the law (Old Testament).

The third thing to note in this allegory is that Hagar, the bondwoman, represents the Ten Commandments (which speak of all the Old Testament here) also known as the old covenant of works from Mount Sinai. This is identified with the earthly Jerusalem (Judaism). These are all in bondage with Jerusalem's children whether they be

ethnic Jews or Gentiles who have put themselves under the Old Testament. There are many Gentile protestants and so-called Baptists in our own day who think their lost condition has been remedied because of something they did. Essentially this is the covenant of works. By implication, the unnamed "freewoman" (Rebekah) represents the covenant of promise, grace as opposed to works, and is free along with her children. Who are her children? This heavenly Jerusalem is the mother of "us all" – all those who like Paul refused to subject themselves to the Old Testament covenant of legal works: all those who have been born by the Spirit. Galatians 3:13-14 states the case of Rebekah's spiritual children – the children of the heavenly Jerusalem clearly: **"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."** Free! Free! Amen and amen!



The Incarnation of

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of other words such as carnival, and incarnation or referring to the Lord Jesus Christ coming in human flesh, God becoming a man.

This is a message which is **"in season,"** and preaching is to be **"in season,"** and **"out of season."** Also, we see where it says in Isaiah 50:4, **"The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned."** This refers to Christ which He said was fulfilled during His sojourn here on earth (Luke 4:16-22).

"A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it" (Pro. 15:23)! I hope and trust this will be a word spoken in due season and that it will be good to your soul.

Spurgeon himself recognized the heathen and Roman Catholic origins of this season, but did not allow error to keep him from preaching and rejoicing in the truth of the incarnation; moreover, he considered

the fact that many people's minds were in gear or in season to consider the subject.

Just because the Muslims believe in monotheism, does not mean I can not rejoice in that truth; just because the Catholics believe in the trinity that does not mean I can not rejoice in that truth either; just because some denominations corrupt the doctrine of the resurrection with Easter and the Easter bunny does not mean I can not celebrate the resurrection every day as I would walk in the newness of life. In like manner, I will not let the heretical views of the incarnation of Christ take away my rejoicing in and preaching of the truth of the incarnation.

As we consider the subject matter at hand, we must be careful in our striving for the truth that we do not engage in striving for the enemy. The doctrines and teachings of God's Word are offensive enough to the natural man without us making them unnecessarily more offensive. In other words, I am reminded of the passage in Titus 2:10, **"Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."** What does this mean? It simply means that we should not make the teachings of God our Saviour look bad because of our bad attitudes, unkind and ungracious words or actions; and by the same token, neither should we bring reproach on the doctrine of God our Saviour by being wishy-washy, compromising, and unclear.

THE NONSENSE SURROUNDING THE INCARNATION OF THE CHRIST

A. The subject of deception and trickery seems to be an in season consideration as I have heard testimony of such antics, pranks, and such, not to mention any names.

B. But, seriously, I can never honestly think of Christmas when I consider the incarnation of the Christ.

C. Christmas, in history, in encyclopedias, in other reference resources, and as the enemies of Christianity bring up, has pagan roots (Jer. 10:1-5).

1. People say they do not worship

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A CHART FOR READING THE BIBLE THROUGH IN A YEAR

JANUARY

1 Genesis 1-3; Matthew 1
2 Genesis 4-6; Matthew 2
3 Genesis 7-9; Matthew 3
4 Genesis 10-12; Matthew 4
5 Genesis 13-15; Matthew 5:1-26
6 Genesis 16-17; Matthew 5:27-48
7 Genesis 18-19; Matthew 6:1-18
8 Genesis 20-22; Matthew 6:19-34
9 Genesis 23-24; Matthew 7
10 Genesis 25-26; Matthew 8:1-17
11 Genesis 27-28; Matthew 8:18-34
12 Genesis 29-30; Matthew 9:1-17
13 Genesis 31-32; Matthew 9:18-38
14 Genesis 33-35; Matthew 10:1-20
15 Genesis 36-38; Matthew 10:21-42
16 Genesis 39-40; Matthew 11
17 Genesis 41-42; Matthew 12:1-23
18 Genesis 43-45; Matthew 12:24-50
19 Genesis 46-48; Matthew 13:1-30
20 Genesis 49-50; Matthew 13:31-58
21 Exodus 1-3; Matthew 14:1-21
22 Exodus 4-6; Matthew 14:22-36
23 Exodus 7-8; Matthew 15:1-20
24 Exodus 9-11; Matthew 15:21-39
25 Exodus 12-13; Matthew 16
26 Exodus 14-15; Matthew 17
27 Exodus 16-18; Matthew 18:1-20
28 Exodus 19-20; Matthew 18:21-35
29 Exodus 21-22; Matthew 19
30 Exodus 23-24; Matthew 20:1-16
31 Exodus 25-26; Matthew 20:17-34

FEBRUARY

1 Exodus 27-28; Matthew 21:1-22
2 Exodus 29-30; Matthew 21:23-46
3 Exodus 31-33; Matthew 22:1-22
4 Exodus 34-35; Matthew 22:23-46
5 Exodus 36-38; Matthew 23:1-22
6 Exodus 39-40; Matthew 23:23-39
7 Leviticus 1-3; Matthew 24:1-28
8 Leviticus 4-5; Matthew 24:29-51
9 Leviticus 6-7; Matthew 25:1-30
10 Leviticus 8-10; Matthew 25:31-46
11 Leviticus 11-12; Matthew 26:1-25
12 Leviticus 13; Matthew 26:26-50
13 Leviticus 14; Matthew 26:51-75
14 Leviticus 15-16; Matthew 27:1-26
15 Leviticus 17-18; Matthew 27:27-50
16 Leviticus 19-20; Matthew 27:51-66
17 Leviticus 21-22; Matthew 28
18 Leviticus 23-24; Mark 1:1-22
19 Leviticus 25; Mark 1:23-45
20 Leviticus 26-27; Mark 2
21 Numbers 1-2; Mark 3:1-19
22 Numbers 3-4; Mark 3:20-35
23 Numbers 5-6; Mark 4:1-20
24 Numbers 7-8; Mark 4:21-41
25 Numbers 9-11; Mark 5:1-20
26 Numbers 12-14; Mark 5:21-43
27 Numbers 15-16; Mark 6:1-29
28 Numbers 17-19; Mark 6:30-56

MARCH

1 Numbers 20-22; Mark 7:1-13
2 Numbers 23-25; Mark 7:14-37
3 Numbers 26-28; Mark 8
4 Numbers 29-31; Mark 9:1-29
5 Numbers 32-34; Mark 9:30-50
6 Numbers 35-36; Mark 10:1-31
7 Deuteronomy 1-3; Mark 10:32-52
8 Deuteronomy 4-6; Mark 11:1-18
9 Deuteronomy 7-9; Mark 11:19-33
10 Deuteronomy 10-12; Mark 12:1-27
11 Deuteronomy 13-15; Mark 12:28-44
12 Deuteronomy 16-18; Mark 13:1-20
13 Deuteronomy 19-21; Mark 13:21-37
14 Deuteronomy 22-24; Mark 14:1-26
15 Deuteronomy 25-27; Mark 14:27-53
16 Deuteronomy 28-29; Mark 14:54-72
17 Deuteronomy 30-31; Mark 15:1-25
18 Deuteronomy 32-34; Mark 15:26-47
19 Joshua 1-3; Mark 16
20 Joshua 4-6; Luke 1:1-20
21 Joshua 7-9; Luke 1:21-38
22 Joshua 10-12; Luke 1:39-56
23 Joshua 13-15; Luke 1:57-80
24 Joshua 16-18; Luke 2:1-24
25 Joshua 19-21; Luke 2:25-52
26 Joshua 22-24; Luke 3
27 Judges 1-3; Luke 4:1-30
28 Judges 4-6; Luke 4:31-44
29 Judges 7-8; Luke 5:1-16
30 Judges 9-10; Luke 5:17-39
31 Judges 11-12; Luke 6:1-26

APRIL

1 Judges 13-15; Luke 27:49
2 Judges 16-18; Luke 7:1-30
3 Judges 19-21; Luke 7:31-50
4 Ruth 1-4; Luke 8:1-25
5 1 Samuel 1-3; Luke 8:26-56
6 1 Samuel 4-6; Luke 9:1-17
7 1 Samuel 7-9; Luke 9:18-36
8 1 Samuel 10-12; Luke 9:37-
9 1 Samuel 13-14; Luke 10:1-24
10 1 Samuel 15-16; Luke 10:25-42
11 1 Samuel 17-18; Luke 11:1-28
12 1 Samuel 19-21; Luke 11:29-54
13 1 Samuel 22-24; Luke 12:1-31
14 1 Samuel 25-26; Luke 12:32-59
15 1 Samuel 27-29; Luke 13:1-22
16 1 Samuel 30-31; Luke 13:23-35
17 2 Samuel 1-2; Luke 14:1-24
18 2 Samuel 3-5; Luke 14:25-35
19 2 Samuel 6-8; Luke 15:1-10
20 2 Samuel 9-11; Luke 15:11-32
21 2 Samuel 12-13; Luke 16
22 2 Samuel 14-15; Luke 17:1-19
23 2 Samuel 16-18; Luke 17:20-37
24 2 Samuel 19-20; Luke 18:1-23
25 2 Samuel 21-22; Luke 18:24-43
26 2 Samuel 23-24; Luke 19:1-27
27 1 Kings 1-2; Luke 19:28-48
28 1 Kings 3-5; Luke 20:1-26
29 1 Kings 6-7; Luke 20:27-47
30 1 Kings 8-9; Luke 21:1-19

MAY

1 1 Kings 10-11; Luke 21:20-38
2 1 Kings 12-13; Luke 22:1-30
3 1 Kings 14-15; Luke 22:31-46
4 1 Kings 16-18; Luke 22:47-71
5 1 Kings 19-20; Luke 23:1-25
6 1 Kings 21-22; Luke 23:26-56
7 2 Kings 1-3; Luke 24:1-35
8 2 Kings 4-6; Luke 24:36-53
9 2 Kings 7-9; John 1:1-28
10 2 Kings 10-12; John 1:29-51
11 2 Kings 13-14; John 2
12 2 Kings 15-16; John 3:1-18
13 2 Kings 17-18; John 3:19-36
14 2 Kings 19-21; John 4:1-30
15 2 Kings 22-23; John 4:31-54
16 2 Kings 24-25; John 5:1-24
17 1 Chronicles 1-3; John 5:25-47
18 1 Chronicles 4-6; John 6:1-21
19 1 Chronicles 7-9; John 6:22-44
20 1 Chronicles 10-12; John 6:45-71
21 1 Chronicles 13-15; John 7:1-27
22 1 Chronicles 16-18; John 7:28-53
23 1 Chronicles 19-21; John 8:1-27
24 1 Chronicles 22-24; John 8:28-59
25 1 Chronicles 25-27; John 9:1-23
26 1 Chronicles 28-29; John 9:24-41
27 2 Chronicles 1-3; John 10:1-23
28 2 Chronicles 4-6; John 10:24-42
29 2 Chronicles 7-9; John 11:1-29
30 2 Chronicles 10-12; John 11:30-57
31 2 Chronicles 13-14; John 12:1-26

JUNE

1 2 Chronicles 15-16; John 12:27-50
2 2 Chronicles 17-18; John 13:1-20
3 2 Chronicles 19-20; John 13:21-38
4 2 Chronicles 21-22; John 14
5 2 Chronicles 23-24; John 15
6 2 Chronicles 25-27; John 16
7 2 Chronicles 28-29; John 17
8 2 Chronicles 30-31; John 18:1-18
9 2 Chronicles 32-33; John 18:19-40
10 2 Chronicles 34-36; John 19:1-22
11 Ezra 1-2; John 19:23-42
12 Ezra 3-5; John 20
13 Ezra 6-8; John 21
14 Ezra 9-10; Acts 1
15 Nehemiah 1-3; Acts 2:1-21
16 Nehemiah 4-6; Acts 2:22-47
17 Nehemiah 7-9; Acts 3
18 Nehemiah 10-11; Acts 4:1-22
19 Nehemiah 12-13; Acts 4:23-37
20 Esther 1-2; Acts 5:1-21
21 Esther 3-5; Acts 5:22-42
22 Esther 6-8; Acts 6
23 Esther 9-10; Acts 7:1-21
24 Job 1-2; Acts 7:22-43
25 Job 3-4; Acts 7:44-60
26 Job 5-7; Acts 8:1-25
27 Job 8-10; Acts 8:26-40
28 Job 11-13; Acts 9:1-21
29 Job 14-16; Acts 9:22-43
30 Job 17-19; Acts 10:1-23

JULY

1 Job 20-21; Acts 10:24-48
2 Job 22-24; Acts 11
3 Job 25-27; Acts 12
4 Job 28-29; Acts 13:1-25
5 Job 30-31; Acts 13:26-52
6 Job 32-33; Acts 14
7 Job 34-35; Acts 15:1-21
8 Job 36-37; Acts 15:22-41
9 Job 38-40; Acts 16:1-21
10 Job 41-42; Acts 16:22-40
11 Psalms 1-3; Acts 17:1-15
12 Psalms 4-6; Acts 17:16-34
13 Psalms 7-9; Acts 18
14 Psalms 10-12; Acts 19:1-20
15 Psalms 13-15; Acts 19:21-41
16 Psalms 16-17; Acts 20:1-16
17 Psalms 18-19; Acts 20:17-38
18 Psalms 20-22; Acts 21:1-17
19 Psalms 23-25; Acts 21:18-40
20 Psalms 26-28; Acts 22
21 Psalms 29-30; Acts 23:1-15
22 Psalms 31-32; Acts 23:16-35
23 Psalms 33-34; Acts 24
24 Psalms 35-36; Acts 25
25 Psalms 37-39; Acts 26
26 Psalms 40-42; Acts 27:1-26
27 Psalms 43-45; Acts 27:27-44
28 Psalms 46-48; Acts 28
29 Psalms 49-50; Romans 1
30 Psalms 51-53; Romans 2
31 Psalms 54-56; Romans 3

AUGUST

1 Psalms 57-59; Romans 4
2 Psalms 60-62; Romans 5
3 Psalms 63-65; Romans 6
4 Psalms 66-67; Romans 7
5 Psalms 68-69; Romans 8:1-21
6 Psalms 70-71; Romans 8:22-39
7 Psalms 72-73; Romans 9:1-15
8 Psalms 74-76; Romans 9:16-33
9 Psalms 77-78; Romans 10
10 Psalms 79-80; Romans 11:1-18
11 Psalms 81-83; Romans 11:19-36
12 Psalms 84-86; Romans 12
13 Psalms 87-88; Romans 13
14 Psalms 89-90; Romans 14
15 Psalms 91-93; Romans 15:1-13
16 Psalms 94-96; Romans 15:14-33
17 Psalms 97-99; Romans 16
18 Psalms 100-102; 1 Corinthians 1
19 Psalms 103-104; 1 Corinthians 2
20 Psalms 105-106; 1 Corinthians 3
21 Psalms 107-109; 1 Corinthians 4
22 Psalms 110-112; 1 Corinthians 5
23 Psalms 113-115; 1 Corinthians 6
24 Psalms 116-118; 1 Corinthians 7:1-19
25 Psalms 119:1-88; 1 Corinthians 7:20-40
26 Psalms 119:89-176; 1 Corinthians 8
27 Psalms 120-122; 1 Corinthians 9
28 Psalms 123-125; 1 Corinthians 10:1-18
29 Psalms 126-128; 1 Corinthians 10:19-33
30 Psalms 129-131; 1 Corinthians 11:1-16
31 Psalms 132-134; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

SEPTEMBER

1 Psalms 135-136; 1 Corinthians 12
2 Psalms 137-139; 1 Corinthians 13
3 Psalms 140-142; 1 Corinthians 14:1-20
4 Psalms 143-145; 1 Corinthians 14:21-40
5 Psalms 146-147; 1 Corinthians 15:1-28
6 Psalms 148-150; 1 Corinthians 15:29-58
7 Proverbs 1-2; 1 Corinthians 16
8 Proverbs 3-5; 2 Corinthians 1
9 Proverbs 6-7; 2 Corinthians 2
10 Proverbs 8-9; 2 Corinthians 3
11 Proverbs 10-12; 2 Corinthians 4
12 Proverbs 13-15; 2 Corinthians 5
13 Proverbs 16-18; 2 Corinthians 6
14 Proverbs 19-21; 2 Corinthians 7
15 Proverbs 22-24; 2 Corinthians 8
16 Proverbs 25-26; 2 Corinthians 9
17 Proverbs 27-29; 2 Corinthians 10
18 Proverbs 30-31; 2 Corinthians 11:1-15
19 Ecclesiastes 1-3; 2 Corinthians 11:16-33
20 Ecclesiastes 4-6; 2 Corinthians 12
21 Ecclesiastes 7-9; 2 Corinthians 13
22 Ecclesiastes 10-12; Galatians 1
23 Song of Solomon 1-3; Galatians 2
24 Song of Solomon 4-5; Galatians 3
25 Song of Solomon 6-8; Galatians 4
26 Isaiah 1-2; Galatians 5
27 Isaiah 3-4; Galatians 6
28 Isaiah 5-6; Ephesians 1
29 Isaiah 7-8; Ephesians 2
30 Isaiah 9-10; Ephesians 3

OCTOBER

1 Isaiah 11-13; Ephesians 4
2 Isaiah 14-16; Ephesians 5:1-16
3 Isaiah 17-19; Ephesians 5:17-33
4 Isaiah 20-22; Ephesians 6
5 Isaiah 23-25; Philippians 1
6 Isaiah 26-27; Philippians 2
7 Isaiah 28-29; Philippians 3
8 Isaiah 30-31; Philippians 4
9 Isaiah 32-33; Colossians 1
10 Isaiah 34-36; Colossians 2
11 Isaiah 37-38; Colossians 3
12 Isaiah 39-40; Colossians 4
13 Isaiah 41-42; 1 Thessalonians 1
14 Isaiah 43-44; 1 Thessalonians 2
15 Isaiah 45-46; 1 Thessalonians 3
16 Isaiah 47-49; 1 Thessalonians 4
17 Isaiah 50-52; 1 Thessalonians 5
18 Isaiah 53-55; 2 Thessalonians 1
19 Isaiah 56-58; 2 Thessalonians 2
20 Isaiah 59-61; 2 Thessalonians 3
21 Isaiah 62-64; 1 Timothy 1
22 Isaiah 65-66; 1 Timothy 2
23 Jeremiah 1-2; 1 Timothy 3
24 Jeremiah 3-5; 1 Timothy 4
25 Jeremiah 6-8; 1 Timothy 5
26 Jeremiah 9-11; 1 Timothy 6
27 Jeremiah 12-14; 2 Timothy 1
28 Jeremiah 15-17; 2 Timothy 2
29 Jeremiah 18-19; 2 Timothy 3
30 Jeremiah 20-21; 2 Timothy 4
31 Jeremiah 22-23; Titus 1

NOVEMBER

1 Jeremiah 24-26; Titus 2
2 Jeremiah 27-29; Titus 3
3 Jeremiah 30-31; Philemon
4 Jeremiah 32-33; Hebrews 1
5 Jeremiah 34-36; Hebrews 2
6 Jeremiah 37-39; Hebrews 3
7 Jeremiah 40-42; Hebrews 4
8 Jeremiah 43-45; Hebrews 5
9 Jeremiah 46-47; Hebrews 6
10 Jeremiah 48-49; Hebrews 7
11 Jeremiah 50; Hebrews 8
12 Jeremiah 51-52; Hebrews 9
13 Lamentations 1-2; Hebrews 10:1-18
14 Lamentations 3-5; Hebrews 10:19-39
15 Ezekiel 1-2; Hebrews 11:1-19
16 Ezekiel 3-4; Hebrews 11:20-40
17 Ezekiel 5-7; Hebrews 12
18 Ezekiel 8-10; Hebrews 13
19 Ezekiel 11-13; James 1
20 Ezekiel 14-15; James 2
21 Ezekiel 16-17; James 3
22 Ezekiel 18-19; James 4
23 Ezekiel 20-21; James 5
24 Ezekiel 22-23; 1 Peter 1
25 Ezekiel 24-26; 1 Peter 2
26 Ezekiel 27-29; 1 Peter 3
27 Ezekiel 30-32; 1 Peter 4
28 Ezekiel 33-34; 1 Peter 5
29 Ezekiel 35-36; 2 Peter 1
30 Ezekiel 37-39; 2 Peter 2

DECEMBER

1 Ezekiel 40-41; 2 Peter 3
2 Ezekiel 42-44; 1 John 1
3 Ezekiel 45-46; 1 John 2
4 Ezekiel 47-48; 1 John 3
5 Daniel 1-2; 1 John 4
6 Daniel 3-4; 1 John 5
7 Daniel 5-7; 2 John
8 Daniel 8-10; 3 John
9 Daniel 11-12; Jude
10 Hosea 1-4; Revelation 1
11 Hosea 5-8; Revelation 2
12 Hosea 9-11; Revelation 3
13 Hosea 12-14; Revelation 4
14 Joel; Revelation 5
15 Amos 1-3; Revelation 6
16 Amos 4-6; Revelation 7
17 Amos 7-9; Revelation 8
18 Obadiah; Revelation 9
19 Jonah; Revelation 10
20 Micah 1-3; Revelation 11
21 Micah 4-5; Revelation 12
22 Micah 6-7; Revelation 13
23 Nahum; Revelation 14
24 Habakkuk; Revelation 15
25 Zephaniah; Revelation 16
26 Haggai; Revelation 17
27 Zechariah 1-4; Revelation 18
28 Zechariah 5-8; Revelation 19
29 Zechariah 9-12; Revelation 20
30 Zechariah 13-14; Revelation 21
31 Malachi; Revelation 22

The Incarnation of

(Continued from page 7) ♦

the tree, but it says **“Learn not the way of the heathen”** (Jer. 10:2), and besides, one of the best ways to learn in school is learning by doing.

2. Consider the idolatry of the nativity—idols of Jesus, images and statues, it is impossible to please God without faith, and Hebrews 11:1, **“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”**

D. Christmas, Christ-Mass, we are not Catholics, the mass is offering up Christ time and time again as the elements of the bread and the wine turn once again into the body and blood of Christ, and supposedly confer grace unto salvation to those who partake thereof, and eliminate or decrease the amount of time in purgatory.

E. Furthermore, the time in which Christ’s birth was observed was a ploy by Catholicism attempting to merge paganism and Christianity.

1. The time was too cold for the shepherds to have been still in the fields.

2. It was also too cold to have collected taxes from Joseph and Mary (Luke 2:1-5), inconvenient, and not very accommodating to collect taxes in such a season, and would not have been a wise move on the part of the Roman government, so as to collect revenue in an efficient, economically advantageous, and timely manner.

3. Secondly, this was the time of the worship of the sun god Tammuz began as the winter solstice, as we hear from the atheists and so forth, in which the sun begins to shine longer and days begin to grow longer.

4. Thus, it was a carnal strategy whereby, as we see today, professing Christianity competes with the world to gain “converts.”

F. Another consideration is that we are never commanded explicitly to observe Christ’s birth as a feast day or any such thing. Can we celebrate and rejoice in the incarnation? We better, the angels, wisemen, shepherds, Mary, and Joseph did!

G. The commercial antics of bait and switch or bait and net for net profit. Making even places of worship to be dens of thieves, trampling,

rudeness, crime, drunkenness, partying, and the like should throw up a huge red flag as to the legitimacy of this holiday we call Christmas.

H. More deception, dishonesty, and trickery surrounding the incarnation of Christ is the lie of Santa Claus (blasphemous “knows who has been naughty or nice, knows when you are sleeping, when you are awake, when you have been bad or good”).

I. There are many discrepancies that are on display surrounding Christ’s incarnation this time of the year. So, those who say for us to put Christ back in Christ-mass, I say Christ was never in it, not the Christ of the Holy Scriptures.

J. Though we realize that we know nothing save for the grace of God and have no rightful room for pride or boasting; we cannot emphasize enough that these inconsistencies are lies and we should not associate with, or be supportive of, these lies, for to do so is to bring reproach upon our Creator and bring judgment upon ourselves, and those we love.

THE NATURE OF THE INCARNATION OF THE CHRIST

A. As is implied in John 1:14, **“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”** Christ was not a spirit, but flesh and bone, from conception, birth, to adulthood and in the resurrection.

B. Without the incarnation of Christ there could not have been a true substitutionary sacrifice for sin, and therefore, no efficacious or effectual sacrifice for sin that would produce the effect of salvation upon the souls of men.

C. The plain meaning of these words is, that our Divine Savior took upon Him human nature. He became a real man, yet a sinless, perfect man. As man He was **“holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners”** (Heb 7:26). This union of the two natures in the person of Christ is one of the mysteries of our faith — **“Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh”** (I Tim. 3:16).

D. It needs to be carefully stated. **“The word”** was His Divine title; **“became flesh”** speaks of His holy humanity. He was, and is, the God-man, yet the Divine and human in

Him were never confounded. His Deity, though veiled, was never laid aside; His humanity, though sinless, was a real humanity; for as incarnate, He **“increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man”** (Luke 2:52). As **“the word”** then, He is the Son of God; as **“flesh,”** the Son of man.

E. This duality of nature was plainly intimated in Old Testament prediction. Prophecy sometimes represented the coming Messiah as human, sometimes as Divine. He was to be the woman’s **“seed”** (Gen. 3:15); a **“Prophet”** like unto Moses (Deut. 18:18); a lineal descendant of David (II Sam. 7:12); Jehovah’s **“servant”** (Isa. 42:1); a **“Man of sorrows”** (Isa. 53:3). Yet, on the other hand, He was to be **“the Branch of the Lord. . . beautiful and glorious”** (Isa. 4:2); He was **“the wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of the ages, the Prince of peace”** (Isa. 9:6). As Jehovah He was to come suddenly to His temple (Mal. 3:1). The One who was to be born in Bethlehem and be Ruler in Israel, was the One “whose goings forth had been from the days of eternity” (Micah 5:2). How were those two different sets of prophecy to be harmonized? John 1:14 is the answer. The One born at Bethlehem was the Divine and eternal Word. The Incarnation does not mean that God dwelt in a man, but that God became Man. He became what He was not previously, though He never ceased to be all that He was before. The Babe of Bethlehem was Immanuel — God with us.

F. This union of the two natures in the Person of Christ was necessary in order to fit Him for the office of Mediator. Three great ends were accomplished by God becoming incarnate, by the Word being made flesh. First, it was now possible for Him to die. Second, He can now be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Third, He has left us an example, that we should follow His steps.

G. The incarnation of the Christ manifests and distinguishes the Persons of the Godhead, the Trinity; **“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us”** (John 1:14). And therefore not the Father; for He is distinguished from the **“Word,”** in

the order of the Trinity, (I John 5:7). And, he is said to be the “Word with God”; that is, with God the Father; and therefore must be distinct from Him (Rev. 19:13, Acts 20:32, John 1:1).

1. The Father was never incarnated
2. The Holy Spirit was never incarnated, but only involved with conception of the Incarnate Word.

3. Thus, we see the union and distinction of the Trinity.

H. Observe, in what sense the Word, or Son of God, was **“made flesh,”** became a partaker “of flesh and blood, came in the flesh,” and was **“manifest in the flesh”**: all which phrases are made use of to express His incarnation (John 1:14, Heb. 2:14, I John 4:2-3, I Tim. 3:16) and signify, that He who is truly God really became man, or assumed the whole human nature, as will be seen presently, into union with His divine person.

1. What is meant by flesh, in the phrases and passages referred to? And by it is meant, not a part of the human body, as that may be distinguished from other parts, as the bones, etc. nor the whole human body, as that may be distinguished from the soul or spirit of a man; as in Matthew 26:41, but a whole individual of human nature, consisting of soul and body; as when it is said, **“There shall no flesh be justified in his sight”** and again, **“That no flesh should glory in his presence”** (Rom. 3:20, I Cor. 1:29) with many other passages; (see Gen. 6:12, Luke 3:6) for such acts as being justified and glorying, can never be said of the flesh or body, abstractly considered; but of the whole man, or of individuals of human nature, consisting of soul and body; and in this sense are we to understand it, when it is used of the incarnation of the Son of God, Who took upon Him the whole nature of man, assumed a true body and a reasonable soul, being in all things made like unto His brethren; so His flesh signifies His human nature, as distinct from the Spirit, His divine nature (Rom. 1:3-4, I Pet. 3:18).

I. He took a true body, not a mere phantom, spectre, or apparition, the appearance of a body, and not a real one; as some fancied, and that very

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Should a Baptist sing and play music at a Catholic funeral? Oklahoma

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Psalm 96:1-4 declares: **O Sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth. Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.**

These verses indicate that it is a good thing for Baptists to sing unto the Lord and show forth His salvation every day. Each and every time an opportunity presents itself for a Baptist to declare the glory of God to others he ought to do it no matter where he finds himself. If I were at a Catholic funeral and someone would ask me to say a few words I would seize the opportunity to share the glories of Christ and His salvation. I can not sing a lick, but if I were asked to sing for God's glory and honor, I would sing The Old Rugged Cross, Amazing Grace, There is Power in the Blood, At Calvary, Victory in Jesus, etc. and keep on singing until they told me to shut up and sit down.

Paul and Silas were thrown into the Philippian jail for preaching the Gospel. Acts 16:25 records: **"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them."** That very night the power of God was manifested in the conversion of the Philippian jailor. Who knows what God will do with our testimony if we are faithful to use every opportunity to honor and glorify His name? We ought to live with our eyes wide open to see doors of opportunity to share the Living Christ with others. A song at a funeral could lead to a

conversation with some precious soul about the Gospel of Christ and the grace of God.

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Personally, I would not do so, and the reason is I would not want to give the impression to not only my family, but those of the Church I pastor, that I approve of Catholicism. I try the best I can to not condone another religion, or practices contrary to the gospel.

MIKE DEWITT

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A distinction might be made between a funeral service held at a funeral home and a church. Usually if it is at a funeral home, then it becomes more of an ecumenical service that is not really a worship service, but more of a memorial service. Every circumstance will be different, but we are to judge righteous judgment. If our participation in such a service will cause us to miss our own worship services, then no, a Baptist should not sing or play music at that service. If it lends credence or would be a stumbling-block to our family, friends and neighbors, then no is the answer again. **"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way"** (Rom. 14:12-13).

However, if the service is held at a Catholic church (which I assume is the thrust of the beloved reader's question), then absolutely not must be the answer! Baptists must keep themselves separate from non-Christian worship services. God is NOT honored by such participation and it is a disservice to the dearly departed as well! Would the Saint that has passed on desire to promote and propagate a false religion and the hope in works for salvation that the Catholic religion presents? Surely they would ask their dearly beloved to stand for the truth, even if they themselves never knew the truth until too late in glory. **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness"** (Rom. 1:16-18).

And even in the opposite case, the rich man in Luke 16 did not desire his brothers to end up where he was! **"Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment"** (Luke 16:27-28). What we need to witness to in these dark and desperate days, is that there IS A DIFFERENCE! Baptists and Catholics are NOT on the same Christian page! They are diametrically opposites in almost every Biblical doctrine!

I will go a bit further than the original question and add that Baptists should not participate in Protestant church services, either. The same stumblingblock issues arise and the case for family and friends should never trump our service to God. Selah! Think about it!

The one exception that would be permitted, is an opportunity to preach the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I can not really see that happening in a Catholic church, so this might be a rare, if not moot point. But if a family is split and they

have the funeral at a Catholic church, but a portion of the family is Baptist and persist in having their pastor preach the funeral message, I would have no problem with that, as long as the Baptist pastor preached a Baptist (Bible!) sermon. **"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will"** (II Tim. 2:24-26).

Too many times we succumb to compromise these ecumenical days. May the LORD help us to take a stand on the truth on every embattled front. **"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest"** (Luke 10:2).

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"And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee. But the LORD thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed. And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven: there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them. The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the LORD thy God. Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it:

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Is someone free to remarry if their spouse abandons them? - New Mexico

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"And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife" (I Cor. 7:10-11). Our text verse clearly states out the two options of someone that has been abandoned by their spouse. 1) Remain unmarried; and 2) Be reconciled to their life-mate. Selah! Think about it! Beloved reader, the Apostle does not allow for any third option of "being free to remarry!"

The problem with our society, is we have become used to divorce and broken families. **"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold"** (Matt. 24:12). The Apostle Paul was very much against divorce and remarriage under any circumstances! **"And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him"** (I Cor. 7:13). **"So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man"** (Rom. 7:3). Death can break the bonds of marriage, but divorce or separation cannot!

The only thing God revealed to the Apostle Paul concerning abandonment was to pray for them! **"But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace"** (I Cor. 7:15). The bondage spoken of in verse 15 is indeed the bondage of

the marriage vows. Not the marriage itself, which is distorted and made unviable by the abandonment. Remember Ruth's vow that most marriage vows are based upon? **"And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me"** (Ruth 1:16-17).

If we are abandoned by our spouse, we have the opportunity to save them! **"For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife"** (I Cor. 7:16)? How do we do this? Pray to the God of miracles! Most Christian folk will see this opportunity and for many days and weeks they will pray for reconciliation, for **"God hath called us to peace..."** But the problem is that the Bible does not put a statute of limitations on this opportunity! Selah! Think about it! I can not find in the Bible that if you have prayed for six months, then you are all of a sudden free of this burden, and it is okay to remarry... Or 1 year... Or a decade...

But it is not just the writings of Paul. Jesus Christ also answered this question concerning the Christian and abandonment of any form, including adultery. **"And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him."** Simple question, eh? Well, He gives a simple answer. **"And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept"**

(Mark 10:2-5). Now the question at hand is phrased, "Is someone FREE to remarry after abandonment?" The LORD is CLEARLY answering here that if you have a hard heart, divorce might be an option, but if you have a soft heart, no, you are not FREE to get a divorce... He then strengthens this commandment of "no divorce option for Christians" with the concluding verses, **"But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"** (Mark 10:6-9).

God did not create marriage as a "trial-n-error" type relationship! It is for life! For both husband and wife! And neither of them have the right to dissolve that relationship. However, just because depraved man does not have the right to murder innocent babies (abortion), does not mean that some (hard-hearted ones) will not do so. Therefore God does regulate that sin of murder with laws, penalties and consequences. He does the same for marriage law breakers. That is where the bill of divorcement comes in. To mark a guilty party as one that is ineligible for marriage. One that is supposed to be praying for reconciliation. Beloved reader, look up every instance of the bill of divorcement in Scripture and you will find out that it is NOT a "get out of jail free" card to go remarry, but rather a mark of uncleanness (Deut. 24:1-4; Jer. 3:1, 8, 14; Isa. 50:1).

But that doesn't always happen either, does it? Christ recognized this in the closing passage of Matthew 19:10-12, **"His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."**

All men cannot receive this saying. The Apostle Paul phrases a similar acknowledgment (for the widows and unmarried) in I Corinthians 7:9, **"But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn."**

Divorce, like death in Scripture, is never annihilation- both are merely separations waiting for reconciliation. Can you keep praying for your lost loved ones, that God might give them spiritual life and call them out of darkness into His marvelous light? Then pray for those broken families that God might work a miracle for them, as well! I understand that sometimes they go off and remarry. There is no reconciliation from that (Deut. 24:4), but there is still service to our God! The Apostle Paul closes chapter 7 of I Corinthians with praise of this "single"ness of opportunity.

One closing thought. If you have a divorce in your past, there is nothing you can do about that anymore. If you have remarried, despite the Bible's prohibition, the miracle of marriage is still unstoppable! Your second marriage vows, are still just that- marriage vows! Reverence your new husband- cherish your new wife! Serve God from this day forth in oneness and threeness of body and spirit! **"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God"** (Rom. 7:4).

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Before I offer my opinion I want to make it perfectly clear that I believe in total reconciliation, and know that it takes two to be in agreement to reconcile, and that divorce should not even be considered until all other avenues have been exhausted to reconcile.

I am going to assume that the
♦ (Continued on page 12)

Forum #1

(Continued from page 10) ♦

but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing" (Deut. 7:22-26).

Before I answer the question that is being asked let me remind the questioner and you, dear reader, that a funeral, wedding, or any other event of the kind is a church/worship services. So with that in mind my answer would be No, a Baptist should not sing and play music at a Catholic funeral. I would never tell anyone they should not go to a loved one's funeral, but Baptists really have no place at any Catholic services. **"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness"** (II Cor. 6:14). (Please read the rest of the chapter.) Going to pay last respects for me is sufficient. If one would feel it necessary I suppose they could meet at the grave site to see the body laid to rest, but I would even question why one would go, the casket holds but an empty shell.

Singing and playing music would be participating in the service which Baptists again should have no part in. Stop and think what is going to be said and done at such a service! I went to a Catholic wedding once; never again. I was amazed at how many non-Catholics who were Christians took part in the communion part of the service and allowed the priest to lay the wafer on their tongue! In the above Scriptures you will notice, anyone who puts his/her belief in a **"graven image"** as the Catholics do is an **"abomination"** to God. God Bless!

ROGER REED



Forum #2

(Continued from page 11) ♦

questioner is contemplating, or has already had, a divorce for the grounds of abandonment/desertion. I also understand that there are probably no two people or preachers who will agree on this subject, and I am very hesitant to answer this question. But

I will try to without making it a long drawn out answer.

According to my convictions there are three Scriptural reasons for divorce: First, death of either of the spouses is an automatic termination of the marriage. Secondly, adultery is a scriptural basis for divorce. And thirdly, malicious desertion by one spouse or the other is grounds for divorce. However, be it understood as we stated at the beginning, because a spouse has scriptural grounds for divorce, a divorce does not have to be sued for. If reconciliation can be realized, and the marriage salvaged thereby, this is the far better choice.

Instances of malicious desertion would be where one spouse forsook the other who was critically ill, or for a spouse to leave the other destitute of the means of livelihood. Of course adultery is a horrible violation of the marriage vows, and is agreed by all to be scriptural grounds for divorce. In any of the two cases stated in this paragraph, the innocent party is free to sue out a divorce, and has the right to remarry **"only in the Lord"** (only another Christian) (I Cor. 7:15, 39).

I would caution here, it may not be, is one free to marry, but what is pleasing to God that is the real question here. We live in a society where the Christian mindset is that God will or has forgiven us so we are free to do whatever when we should be thinking about that Jesus is coming back and how will we fare when we stand/bow before Him and how great will our sorrow be when we look Him face to face? Much could be cited on this subject but I feel I have answered sufficiently! God Bless!

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We live in an age of so-called "no-fault" divorce. According to the civil laws of the state of Ohio a person can leave their spouse for one year and divorce them without consent. Once granted a divorce, both parties including the one whose ex spouse

abandoned them, are free to remarry legally according to state law. So, if you want to remarry because your spouse supposedly abandoned you, there are ways to do it legally. This kind of mentality has led to what I call "serial marriages" where it is not uncommon for some folks to be divorced and remarried for whatever reason two, three, four, even five times. The vows of marriage are tossed aside like an old pair of shoes that are worn out. I am not in favor of such a system. It has cheapened the sanctity of the marriage covenant and in the process has done a lot of damage to families who must suffer through the calamity of divorce.

There is no doubt that this is a complicated and controversial issue. I cannot speak for everyone but here is how I would counsel someone whose spouse abandoned them. I would tell them to seek God and pray for reconciliation just as I Corinthians 7:10-11 commands: **"And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife."** If God in His providence would not bring about reconciliation, I would pray that God would give them the grace to obey I Corinthians 7:27: **"Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife."** I would fervently pray that God would give them grace to be entirely devoted to Him (**"...and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction,"** I Cor. 7:35), and to take away any fleshly desire to remarry as long as the ex-spouse was still alive.

If at some time in the future the ex-spouse died, then the abandoned party would be free to remarry (only in the Lord) according to I Corinthians 7:39: **"The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord."** Romans 7:2-3 uses very similar language: **"For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law as long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of**

her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."

I know that the Scriptures quoted above are not popular in our present day. We must pray for our young people, that God will grant them wisdom to marry the right person and to sincerely strive to carry out their marriage vows until death do them part.

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No.

"I take you for my lawful husband/wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part."

Do those words sound familiar? They are called marriage vows which were made before those present during the wedding ceremony and before God. God's Holy Word has a lot to say about vows, I will not list all there is but I will give a few verses on how God views vows. **"When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay"** (Eccl. 5:4-5). The husband and the wife make a separate vow, just because the husband does not pay his vow that he has vowed, does not liberate the wife from the vow she has made. In other words, if my wife breaks her vow, it does not break my vow.

I suppose by this point if you are still reading this answer you are curious as to what is next. **"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit**

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Forum #2

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unto God" (Rom. 7:4). I was told by a preacher, "you can not use this passage because it is talking about the law." My answer to that is, the Apostle is not talking about the law but our relationship with Christ. God uses marriage as an example plenty. Why can we not use the plain teaching of God's Holy Word? I suppose the reason is, it does not fit with some preachers' and churches' doctrine. The verses preceding the 4th verse implicitly state that a husband cannot marry another without committing adultery unless the wife be dead and vice versa. That statement comes from the Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Why would He give an opposing doctrine to Luke 16:18, or to Mark 10:11-12, Matthew 5:32, and Matthew 19:9? Please remember there is a difference between fornication and adultery, those are two different Greek words. I am talking about a married woman or man is unable to commit fornication.

Dear readers, what and who can separate us from the love of God? Once we are married to Christ can we be separated even though we may at times become, as it seems by our actions, separated from our Saviour? Will, or does our Saviour seek another even though we sin against Him? No, because He loves us.

The very fact that never is found a verse stating remarriage is allowed, save for the death of the spouse, ought to raise serious thought on the subject at hand.

Does the hardness of heart that Jesus speaks of lie within you? Jesus said **"For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept"** (Mark 10:5). Do we understand the word hardness? God said to Israel that their heart was far from Him, meaning they had no spiritual understanding. It was because of the hardness of their heart. Lack of spiritual perception is the reason for divorce, period. How many of us "Christians" claim we love our neighbor, or that we do unto others as we would want them to do unto us? Why would I give up on a marriage when God says **"And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the**

wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife" (I Cor. 7:10-11). Now recognize this verse is in the same chapter the questioner is asking about. Wait, here is another in the same chapter, **"Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife"** (I Cor. 7:27). Oh, and do not forget this passage, once again in the same chapter, **"The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord"** (I Cor. 7:39). That verse is almost word for word as Romans 7.

Why would a child of God give advice opposed to God's Holy Word? I can answer that, to serve the flesh. Mark 10:11-12 plainly states the situation, as also does Luke 16:18.

I come back to the question, the Apostle Paul plainly says, **"But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"** (I Cor. 7:15-16). That word bondage means to give myself wholly to one's needs, to become a servant. When the unbelieving depart that means you do not need to wash their clothes anymore, or cook for them, or provide a home for them and so on. The child of God should have a heart to see the one they said they "loved," even though they have departed, to be saved. Salvation is the goal for the unbelieving spouse, not another marriage for the "believer," reconciliation is the goal for the marriage!

What is more consistent with God's Holy Word? Let us reason over the Scriptures. How were we free to marry Christ? The elects marriage to Christ: can we be divorced from Him and free to marry another? God's wife Israel: did they go a-whoring? Did He put her away? How many of you preachers and teachers preach the reconciliation of Israel to her husband God, and are not consistent in this perfect model by teaching and

preaching remarriage is okay with God? Why would God allow you to do something He said He would never do?

There is much more to be said, and I have written way too much already, as I have tried to keep my answers in the past short and to the point, but the condition of our people and churches deserves an in depth answer, so that we may be separate from the world on this topic and not a mirror to it.

MIKE DEWITT



The Incarnation of

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early, even in the times of the Apostle John, who contested with the early gnostics, as in Matthew 14:5 which signifies, that Christ was really a man, a real prophet, as John was accounted a real prophet, and not merely like one; and which is evident by his being obedient unto death.

J. The appearances of Christ in an human form, before His coming in the flesh, the Scriptures speak of; real bodies were formed and animated, and made use of for a time, and then laid aside; as seems to be the case of the three men that appeared to Abraham, two of which were angels, and the other the Lord, Jehovah, the Son of God; who were clothed with bodies, capable of walking and travelling, of talking and conversing, of eating and drinking in; so the man that wrestled with Jacob, who was no other than the Angel of the covenant, the promised Messiah; the body He appeared in was not a mere phantom, spectre, and apparition, but palpable flesh, that was felt and handled, and grasped, and held fast, by Jacob; and which he would not let go till he had received the blessing.

K. All Christ's actions, and what is said of Him from His birth to His death, and in and after it, show it was a true body that He assumed; He was born and brought into the world as other men are; and when born, His body grew and increased in stature, as other human bodies do: the Son of man came eating and drinking; He traveled through Judea and Galilee; He slept in the ship with His disciples; He was seen, and heard, and handled by them; He was buffeted, scourged,

bruised, wounded, and crucified by men; His body, when dead, was asked of the governor by Joseph, was taken down from the cross by him, and laid in his tomb; and the same identical body, with the prints of the nails and spear in it, was raised from the dead, and seen and handled by His disciples; to whom it was demonstrated, that He had flesh and bones, a spirit has not: yea, the very infirmities that attended Him, though sinless, were proofs of His body being a true and real one; such as His fatigue and weariness in traveling, (John 4:6) His tears at the grave of Lazarus, and over Jerusalem; and His sweat in the garden, (John 11:35, Luke 19:41, 22:44).

L. In short, it was through weakness of the flesh that He was crucified; which was not in appearance, but in reality. The body He assumed was mortal, as it was proper it should be, since the end of His assumption of it was to suffer death in it; but being raised from the dead, it is become immortal, and will never die more, but will remain, as the pledge and pattern of the resurrection of the bodies of the saints, which will be fashioned like to His glorious body; and which will be the object of the corporal vision of the saints after their resurrection, with joy and pleasure, to all eternity.

M. Christ assumed a reasonable soul, with His true body, which make up the nature He took upon Him, and are included in the flesh He was made,

1. Christ asserts, that He had a soul; and which, He says, was exceeding sorrowful; and which was an immaterial and immortal spirit; and which, when His body died, and was separated from it, He commended into the hands of His divine Father (Matt. 26:38, Luke 23:46).

2. Had He not an human soul, He would not be a perfect man; and could not be called, as He is, the man Christ Jesus: the integral parts of man, and which constitute one, are soul and body; and without which He cannot be called a man; these distinguish Him from other creatures: on the one hand He is distinguished from angels, immaterial and immortal spirits, with which His soul has a cognation, by having a body, or by being an embodied spirit; whereas they are

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incorporeal: so, on the other hand, He is distinguished from mere animals, who have bodies as well as He, by His having a rational and immortal soul: and if Christ was without one, He could not be in all things like unto us; being deficient in that which is the most excellent and most noble part of man.

3. Besides, if He had not had an human soul, He could not have been tempted in all points like as we are (Heb. 4:15) since the temptations of Satan chiefly respect the soul, the mind, and the thoughts of it, and affect and distress that: nor could He have bore the wrath of God, nor have had a sensation of that; which it is certain He had, when the weight of the sins of His people lay on Him, and pressed Him sore (see Ps. 89:38, Matt. 26:38). Nor could He have been a perfect sacrifice for their sins; which required His soul as well as His body, (Isa. 53:10, Heb. 10:10) nor have been the Saviour of their souls; as He is both of body and soul, giving life for life, body for body, soul for soul (I Pet. 1:9).

N. The conception in the incarnation of the Christ.

1. Conception; this is a most wonderful, abstruse, and mysterious affair; and which to speak of is very difficult.

2. This conception was by a virgin; it was a virgin that conceived the human body of Christ, as was foretold it should; which was very wonderful, and therefore introduced with a note of admiration; **"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son!"** This was a **"new thing"**; unheard of and astonishing; which God "created in the earth," in the lower parts of the earth, in the virgin's womb; "A woman compassed," or conceived, "a man," without the knowledge of man (Isa. 7:14, Jer. 31:22). This was not natural, but supernatural; **"That which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost."**

3. This conception was through the power and influence of the Holy Ghost, overshadowing the virgin.

4. It had to be in order that the human nature of Christ be sinless, that He was virgin born.

O. It was a nature, and not a person, that Christ assumed so early as at its conception; it is called "the holy Thing," and not a person; **"The seed of Abraham,"** or the nature of the seed of Abraham; the "form" and "fashion" of a man, that is, the nature of man; as **"the form of God,"** in the same passage, signifies the nature of God (see Luke 1:35, Heb. 2:16, Phil. 2:6-8).

P. Christ was born of a virgin of the house of David; as in Luke 1:27 for the phrase of the house of David, is equally true of the virgin, as of Joseph, and may be connected with her. God promised to David, that the Messiah should be of his seed; and accordingly, of his seed He raised up unto Israel, a Saviour Jesus, who is therefore called the Son of David; and is both **"the root and offspring of David;"** the root of David, as God, and David's Lord; and the offspring of David, as man, descending from him (Acts 13:23, Rev. 22:16).

Q. He was born of a virgin of the tribe of Judah; as she must be, since she was of the house of David, which was of that tribe; and it is manifest, as the apostle says, that our Lord sprung out of the tribe of Judah, as it was foretold He should (Gen. 49:10, Heb. 7:14).

R. The ends of Christ's incarnation are many; there is a cluster of them in the song of the angels at His birth; **"Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, good will toward men"** (Luke 2:14).

1. One end of Christ's incarnation was, to show forth the glory of God in it; the glory of His grace, kindness, and goodness to men, in the mission of His Son in this way; the glory of His faithfulness in fulfilling His promise of it

2. Another end of Christ's incarnation was, to make peace with God for men on earth; to make reconciliation for sin, was the work appointed Him in covenant; and to do this, was the reason of His being made in all things like unto His brethren; and this end is answered; He has reconciled sinners to God by His death, and made peace for them by the blood of His cross.

3. Another end of Christ's incarnation was, not only to show the good will of God to men, but that they

might receive the fruits of His good will and favour towards them; even all the blessings of grace, those spiritual blessings provided in covenant, and laid up in Christ; and which came by Him our High Priest, and through His blood, called therefore, the blood of the everlasting covenant.

4. Particularly, Christ became man that He might be our God, our near kinsman, and might appear to have a right to redeem us; and He was, in the fullness of time, made of a woman, to redeem men from the law, its curse and condemnation; and that they might receive the adoption of children, and every other blessing included in or connected with redemption; as peace, pardon, and justification; for He was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, that by the sacrifice of Himself for sin, He might condemn it in the flesh; and that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, as represented by Him, and so be completely justified in Him (Gen. 4:4-5, Rom. 8:3-4).

5. Christ became man, that He might be a Mediator between God and men; and the better to perform each of the parts of His office as such, He took upon Him the nature of man; that He might have something to offer as a Priest to be a Sacrifice for sin, and that He might make satisfaction for it in that nature that sinned; and that He might be a prophet like unto Moses, raised up, as he was, among his brethren; and having the power of the Lord God upon Him, might preach glad tidings to the meek; and that He might appear to be a King taken from among His brethren, as the kings of Israel were; and to be the Ruler, Noble, and Governor that proceeded from the midst of them, as was predicted He should (Jer. 30:21), and so sit and reign upon the throne of His father David.

S. O the Wonder and Glory of Christ's Humanity—Glory to God in the highest, say the angels. The wonder that Christ would come down from the glories of a perfect heaven amidst the praise of all the angelic hosts to endure the ridicule of mere mortals, endure the cross, for abominable sinners of such a lot as us—it ought to make us stand in awe, and then bow in worship, praise, and adoration to our God.

THE NECESSITY OF THE

INCARNATION OF THE CHRIST

A. Now, humanly speaking, on a more positive note, let us take note of the necessity of the Incarnation.

B. First of all, prophecy involving the Incarnation, necessitated the fulfillment thereof.

1. Micah 5:2, **"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."**

2. Isaiah 49:6, **"And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."** Simeon recognized this prophecy was to be fulfilled before he died and quoted this passage in Luke 2:32, **"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."**

3. Isaiah 7:14, **"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."**

4. Isaiah 9:6, **"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."**

5. Isaiah 11:1, **"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."**

6. Luke 1:31, **"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS." "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins"** (Matt. 1:21).

C. The incarnation of the Christ is a very considerable part of the glad tidings of the gospel, and which give it that name: when the angels related to the shepherds the birth of Christ, he said unto them; **"Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy"** (Luke 2:10-11).

D. The gospel, as a whole, has elements of mystery in it, which

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stands to reason, as God is, and His ways, and thoughts are above ours; after all, He is the Creator and we are mere objects, if you will, of His creation. The various doctrines of it are the mysteries of the kingdom; the knowledge of which is given to some, and not to others; it is the mystery of godliness, and, without controversy, great; and this stands the first and principal article of it; **"God. . . manifest in the flesh"** (I Tim. 3:16).

E. This is the basis of the Christian religion; a fundamental article of it; and without the belief of it no man can be a Christian; **"Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God,"** born of God, and belongs to Him, and is on the side of God and truth; **"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God"** (I John 4:2-3).

F. This truth will be more and more attacked as Mohammedans or Muslims, as they like to be called, gain prominence, for they despise the doctrine of the Incarnation, for they imagine it below the majesty of God to come as a human being.

G. Likewise, we see this with the cults who deny Christ's Deity and only embrace His humanity, which in reality is an oxymoron, for Christ cannot be embraced in part, but only in whole, for to do otherwise is to embrace an antichrist.

H. The nature and necessity of the incarnation of the Christ demands application, not just admiration.

1. The wise men not only beheld in awe and wonder at the incarnation of the Christ, but bowed before Him and worshipped Him.

2. Will you not bow before the Christ Who became a man, submit yourself, prostrate yourself before Him Who spoke the Universe into existence, and confess your sins, turn from your wicked ways, and trust in Him Who came with no form or comeliness that we might desire Him, Who was despised and rejected of men, Who bore the sins of His dear children upon the cross, died as a ransom for many?

3. It is true wise men still seek Him, those who have been made wise unto

salvation.

The last part of our text says in describing the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-Man. And now let us notice a few contrasts between Law and Grace. **"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth"** (John 1:14).

The Law demanded righteousness from men; Grace brings righteousness to men. The Law sentences a living man to death; Grace brings a dead man to life. The Law speaks of what men must do for God; Grace tells of what Christ has done for men. The Law gives a knowledge of sin; Grace puts away sin.

Maybe all the fancy and empty frills of the world have distracted and discouraged you from coming to Christ. Christ is the Truth who has come to set His people free; Christ has come to set the captive free, Christ came into the world to save sinners.

For those who are saved, how liberating the truth is, if we see it for what it is, or rather who He is. The truth will set you free and lies will put you in bondage and enslave you, sooner or later. The choice is clear, and the Lord has made it clear, may we trust God, and by faith, believe in and embrace the true Christ of the Holy Scriptures, so we can really worship Him in Spirit and in truth.



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



How To Burn A Child

"Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: but he did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD, like David his father: For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim. Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel" (II Chron. 28:1-3).

Molech was a detestable Semitic deity honored by the sacrifice of children. The hands of the idol being red-hot, the children were passed through between them. This was considered an act of ceremonial purification. Palestinian excavations have uncovered evidence of infant skeletons in burial places around heathen shrines. The worship of Molech was a form of demon worship which often resulted in the death of the infant.

Describing this heathen worship the psalmist wrote: **"Yea, they**

sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood" (Ps. 106:37-38).

The Lord strongly prohibited this heathen worship among the children of Israel (Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5; Deut. 18:10). It seems that Israel embraced this idolatrous worship about the time of Ahab. Solomon built an altar to Molech at Tophet in the valley of Hinnom. Manasseh in his idolatrous orgy honored this deity. The cult would decline and revive at different times in Israel's history. The prophets often spoke out against it (Jer. 7:29-34; Ezek. 16:20; 23:37-39; Amos 5:26).

In our text Ahaz, the king of Judah, is seen offering his own children as a burnt-offering according to the Canaanite practice. Most people are shocked by this horrifying

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Saturday Morning Thoughts by Curtis Pugh



How does understanding the doctrine of God's sovereign grace in salvation affect our evangelism?

If our understanding of grace does not alter our ordinary view of evangelism, we do not understand

grace aright. We should preach, teach, witness and pray confidently expecting God to save His elect. On the other hand, if our understanding of grace deadens our efforts at evangelism we do not understand grace aright. This is because God uses means – the means He established – the preaching of the gospel in bringing men to Christ. Nobody was ever born again apart from the gospel. If our understanding of grace causes us to resort to gimmicks and high-pressure tactics – i.e. the "invitation system" – in order to get people to "come forward" and make a profession, we do not understand evangelism aright. This is because when we leave God's

appointed means and resort to fleshly psychological manipulation we only produce fleshly products (John 3:6). The Lord's churches were not commissioned to teach lost men doctrine. The commission is to preach the gospel – the finished substitutionary work of Christ – as per I Corinthians 15:1-4. Then those who profess a good profession are to be baptized – not catechized. THEN, after they are members of one of the Lord's congregations, they are to be taught to observe all things that Christ has commanded – i.e. the full revelation or counsel of God.



How To Burn A

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action of a wicked king. Many individuals cry out against this cruel and inhuman deed. But before any person judges Ahaz, he should look at himself and his family. Those who fail to religiously educate their children are no better than Ahaz. Many professed Christian parents, by neglect and carelessness, are permitting their children to grow up ignorant of the things of God, and to die in unbelief.

THE PRESENT PLIGHT

Unsaved parents do not religiously educate their children. This we may very well expect. But it is shocking to see many who profess to know God who leave their children to Satan and sin by indifference. Many sovereign gracers boast and say, "I am waiting on the Lord to save them." It is true that only God can save any one who is lost, but such parents forget that God works through means. The Lord has given some strict and stern commandments to parents about the religious instruction of their children. It appears that some would try to put all the work on God and blame Him for their rebellious offspring.

It is a Bible fact that election often runs in a straight line. II John 1 says: **"The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth."** John then tells how he rejoices to know that her children walk in truth (II John 4). On the day of Pentecost Peter said concerning repentance and the remission of sins: **"For this promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call"** (Acts 2:39).

In the light of such Scriptures those of us who believe in sovereign grace have a good reason to hope that God will save our children. But we must never use these verses as an excuse for disobedience to God. To ignore the teaching responsibility which God placed on parents and cling to God's election is a terrible perversion of the Bible. Such foolish action tends to leave our children to Satan and to the fires of Hell. This gives the enemies of the Lord a great

occasion to blaspheme.

THE CHANGE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The public schools in America were first started to help people understand the Bible. In the early days of this country the Bible and morality held an important place in the curriculum of our public schools. But in our generation, along with the rise of a multiplicity of religious denominations and false cults, our public schools have begun to teach less and less of the Bible and morality. I regret to say that some school textbooks now contain curse words against God and Satan's theory of evolution. The Devil has even succeeded in securing some professed believers to teach such heresy to our children. Many school textbooks even teach a form of socialism and humanism which is in direct conflict with the Bible.

In spite of Satan's present program to brainwash our children with his lies, there are still many public schools where godly persons refuse to teach such foolishness. God is still revered in many classrooms in remote places where God-fearing men and women serve as teachers of our children. Thank God for all such schools. Thank God for every public school teacher who dares to teach the existence of God, despite the ban on prayer and Bible reading by the Supreme Court of the United States.

Since I believe in the separation of church and state, I do not believe it is the business of the public schools to teach religion. Religious instruction, in the main, should be left to the church and the home. But I do not believe in a godless school system. I do not favor teaching evolution as a fact when it is a fiction. If evolution must be taught, then teach the Genesis account of creation as the Christian theory. If all religious instruction is to be eliminated from the public schools, then do not permit the textbooks to curse God or the teachers to curse God in the classroom.

PUBLIC TEACHING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Under the old dispensation there was a public teaching of the Scriptures. God told Moses:

"Gather me the people together, and I will make them to hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children" (Deut. 4:10).

In the reign of King Jehoshaphat of Judah princes were sent out **"to teach in the cities of Judah"** (II Chron. 17:7). The priests and Levites traveled with these princes, and **"they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people"** (II Chron. 17:9). Great blessings followed these itinerant judges and itinerant preachers (II Chron. 17:10). What a wonderful day in the history of Judah when the law of the land was the law of God!

In the time of the Prophet Elijah there was a school of the prophets (II Kings 2:5). It was attended by over fifty students (II Kings 2:7). The law was publicly read and expounded in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh. 8:1-8). Finally, in every city belonging to the Jews there was built a synagogue. Concerning this time James said: **"For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day"** (Acts 15:21).

TEACHING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus Christ spent His ministry on earth practicing and teaching the things of God (Acts 1:1). Of Him Matthew tells us: **"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people"** (Matt. 9:35). The Master Teacher **"taught his disciples"** (Mark 9:31) and the common people (Luke 5:3). He declared on one occasion: **"I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not"** (Mark 14:49).

Before leaving this world Christ commanded His church to teach baptized disciples all things which He commanded (Matt. 28:19-20). The early churches took this command seriously. It is said that **"they taught the people"** (Acts 4:2). Some of the ministers of the

churches went into the Jewish temple and taught the people (Acts 5:21-25). It is said in Acts 5:42: **"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."**

The apostles spent most of their time teaching the people. Acts 15:35 declares: **"Paul also, and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also."** In His farewell address to the Ephesian elders Paul reminded them: **"And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house"** (Acts 20:20). The Jews charged Paul by saying: **"Thou teachest all the Jews"** (Acts 21:21) and again: **"This is the man, that teacheth all men every where"** (Acts 21:28).

The ascended Christ gave the church **"pastors and teachers"** (Eph. 4:11; I Cor. 12:28). The pastor is not the only teacher in a church, for the Jerusalem church had a plurality of teachers (Acts 13:1). Paul told a young pastor, Timothy, to commit some of the teaching work **"to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"** (II Tim. 2:2). The purpose of Christian instruction by the church is to cause those taught in the Word to become teachers of the Word (Heb. 5:12).

Many churches have Sunday school before the preaching service. This is a time when children and adults are taught the things of the Lord. This is usually followed by the preaching service which should also be a teaching service. All good preaching is teaching. Preaching which does not teach is nothing more than beating the air. Such church services are intended to supplement home teaching, not to take its place. The parents cannot leave all the religious training of their children to the preaching service or Sunday school. God has placed great responsibility on the father and mother.

TEACHING IN THE HOME

In Old Testament times there was great stress placed upon religious teaching in the home. A child would learn at home the Shema, or the

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How To Burn A

(Continued from page 16) ♦

Jewish creed. A Jewish child had to memorize passages from the Torah, certain common proverbs, and some selected Psalms. In school he would learn to repeat the words of the Torah. As he advanced he would be instructed in the Mishna and Talmud. He studied until he could interpret the law from every possible approach.

The Lord told Israel: **"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"** (Deut. 6:6-7). Here it is seen to be the duty of parents to take great pain to teach their offspring to love God and to serve God. Every opportunity should be used to instill the knowledge of Divine things in their tender minds.

It is God's plan that true religion be perpetuated from generation to generation by religious instructions in the home. **"I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generations to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments"** (Ps. 78:2-7).

By means of religious teaching on the part of believing parents there will always be a seed to serve the Lord (Ps. 22:30-31). Such work tends to make God's good name as the days of Heaven. Parents must show **"the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and**

his wonderful works that he hath done." This is to be done that our children might **"hope in God"** and **"keep his commandments."** Failure to discharge this parental duty will result in **"a stubborn and rebellious generation"** (Ps. 78:8).

THE COMMAND OF GOD

In Proverbs 22:6 it is written: **"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."** This is a direct command from God. Parents must catechize their children in their age of vanity to keep them from the sin and snare of the Devil. Children must be trained in the way God would have them to go, and not the way they would go according to their corrupt nature. If children receive proper training in the home, they will not easily or ordinarily depart from the way of holiness when they grow older. Good impressions will abide with them all their days.

Since the father is the head of the home, God especially holds him responsible for this religious instruction. No father has the right to rear a family and ignore their religious needs. A man is just as much responsible to provide for his family's religious needs as he is to provide food and shelter for them. The world today needs some daddies who will say like Joshua of old: **"But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"** (Josh. 24:15). The Lord said of Abraham: **"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord"** (Gen. 18:19).

Christian parents should pray for their children as Abraham did for Ishmael (Gen. 17:18) and Hannah did for Samuel (I Sam. 1:27). Parents must bring their children under the means of grace, the preaching of the gospel of Christ. They must teach them their duty to God and man. They must set a good example of a holy life before them. Neglect and failure on the part of parents is tragic and God-dishonoring.

In the New Testament God commands: **"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"** (Eph. 6:4).

Some father may say, "I am bringing up my children. I send them to public school and Sunday school. I put clothes on their back and money in their pockets." This is well and good as far as it goes. But Ephesians 6:4 says that a father is to bring his child up in the **"nurture and admonition of the Lord."** **"Nurture"** means "to train by chastening when needed." **"Admonition"** means "to train by words." This discipline and moral teaching must be such as the Lord approves.

TEACHING THE WORD AND CONVERSION

According to Deuteronomy 31:12-13 the Scriptures are to be read and heard by our children in our home. This is to be done that **"children, which have not known any thing, may hear and learn to fear the Lord."** God will bless the teaching of His Word to the conversion of our children.

Timothy received excellent instructions from his mother and grandmother. The Apostle Paul said of him: **"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also"** (II Tim. 1:5). Paul goes on to say of young Timothy: **"And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus"** (II Tim. 3:15).

Eunice and Lois had taught Timothy the Old Testament Scriptures from his earliest childhood. The word "child" ("brephos") in the Greek means "newly born" or "infant." Jewish children were taught the Old Testament Scriptures as soon as they could speak. Here we learn it is proper to teach the Bible to children at the earliest age possible. Such a practice becomes Christian parents.

The Scriptures are able to make a child wise unto salvation. This does not mean the mere words of the Scripture (John 5:39). It means that the Bible tells of Christ Who is an able, willing, suitable, complete Savior. The Bible makes known the salvation by Him when illuminated by the Holy Spirit. In the hands of the Holy Spirit the Word is the wisdom

of salvation, but the Word taught and heard does not profit unless it is mixed with faith in Christ (Heb. 4:2). Salvation can be enjoyed only through faith which has Christ as its author and object. This faith comes through the Word (Rom. 10:14).

GOD SAVE THE CHILDREN

It is well-known to us all that there is less religious instruction in the home than ever before. Most parents are too busy making a living to take the time to religiously educate their children. The real teacher in most homes of young children is the TV set. God has been made an alien in most professed Christian homes. The book of Heaven is either dusty or hidden under worldly books.

As I ponder these words my eyes focus upon a modern youth. His hair is long, and his face bears the marks of sin. He is standing on a lonely street corner. He is spineless and dirty-mouthed. He has been ignored and unloved by his parents. His best teacher has been an illuminated picture tube of violence and evil lusts. His spiritual perception is dim, and his sense of values distorted. In matters of sex and morality he lives like an animal, for he has been taught in his formative years in public school that man came from a monkey. His mind is blown due to the abuse of drugs and whiskey. He is a problem to society---a social misfit. He is totally ignorant of God and the Bible. Hell is his certain destiny.

What is wrong with this boy? His parents have offered him to Molech. They have hidden the things of God from him and left him to the Devil---yea, they have left their own flesh and blood to suffer eternally in Hell! His parents did not care for his soul! They never told him of Jesus Christ the Savior. By indifference and neglect they have committed a worse sin than did Ahaz of Judah. God have mercy on such people!

Listen to me, father. Are you a modern-day Ahaz? If you are, why do you not begin today to teach the Bible to your children? Why not take them to church and Sunday school? Mom and dad, if you are unsaved, why do you not trust the Savior?



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.

SIX-YEAR-OLD GRANTED "GENDER IDENTITY" CHANGE

(WNS)--The British publication The Telegraph is reporting that Argentina has granted a six-year-old boy a female identification card and has amended his birth certificate to say he is a girl. Under a new "gender identity" law in Argentina, "Gender identity is understood as the internal and individual way in which gender is perceived by persons, that can correspond or not to the gender assigned at birth, including the personal experience of the body. This can involve modifying bodily appearance or functions through pharmacological, surgical or other means, provided it is freely chosen. It also includes other expressions of gender such as dress, ways of speaking and gestures."

NEW JERSEY FIGHT OVER REPARATIVE THERAPY NOT OVER YET

(WNS)--In August New Jersey passed a law preventing licensed therapists from helping men and women with unwanted homosexual attraction overcome these destructive desires. The law generated a national controversy because it could have the effect of criminalizing Christian counselors in the state. The law is in the news again after two New Jersey parents sued because they believe homosexuality is immoral and want help for their 15-year-old son. Under current law, they can't get that help. According to Yahoo News: "[The unnamed teen] has a sincerely held religious belief and conviction that homosexuality is wrong and immoral, and he wanted to address that value conflict because his unwanted same-sex attractions and gender confusion are contrary to the fundamental religious values that he holds, the lawsuit claims."

SUPREME COURT ALLOWS TEXAS ABORTION LAW TO STAND

(WNS)--A divided U.S. Supreme

Court allowed Texas' new abortion law to stand while litigation continues in the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. That means that the law restricting abortion centers took effect Oct. 31, and as a result, about a third of the abortion centers in the state will close. The 5th Circuit temporarily allowed the portion of the law that requires that abortionists have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital, after a lower court had blocked that part of the law. The circuit court will hear arguments on the constitutionality of the law in January, which will be an expedited hearing. The law's challengers had submitted an emergency application to the U.S. Supreme Court to stay the law as litigation continues. Justice Antonin Scalia handles emergency applications from Texas, but likely due to the controversial nature of the law, he had his eight colleagues weigh in.

TWO TEXAS ABORTION FACILITIES START UP AGAIN

(WNS)--Two Texas abortion centers have started offering abortions again after a new set of restrictions forced them to stop at the beginning of the month. The regulations require abortionists to have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital. Abortion providers at Whole Woman's Health in Fort Worth and Planned Parenthood in Austin were able to get the required hospital privileges, according to mySA.com. The two centers are among an estimated 14 in the state that had to stop performing abortions because of the law. A federal judge ruled on Oct. 28 that the regulation placed an "undue burden" on women seeking abortions, but the U.S. Supreme Court decided the law could remain in effect while legal appeals are in progress.

UNIONS EXEMPT FROM OBAMACARE

(WNS)--Republicans are bristling today over a sly move by the Obama administration to relieve unions of their

duty to pay for Obamacare. "Despite endorsing Obamacare and working fervently to get it passed, unions are now experiencing the ugly reality of this law, and they want out," Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., said in a statement. The White House published proposed federal rules for 2015 this week that would exempt union healthcare plans, known as Taft-Hartley plans, from the Obamacare reinsurance tax. That tax was designed to raise funds for covering people with pre-existing conditions by taxing self-insured plans, or those in which employers do not use a third-party administrator to insure workers. Thune has introduced a bill that would block a union exemption to the reinsurance tax.

CLERGY HOUSING ALLOWANCE STRUCK DOWN

(WNS)--A federal judge has struck down a law that gives clergy tax-free housing allowances in a decision that could have far-reaching financial ramifications for pastors across the United States. In her decision Friday, U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb in Wisconsin wrote that the exemption "provides a benefit to religious persons and no one else, even though doing so is not necessary to alleviate a special burden on religious exercise," the *Wisconsin State Journal* reported. The Madison-based Freedom from Religion Foundation filed the lawsuit against U.S. Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew and acting IRS commissioner Daniel Werfel. Christian groups are expected to rally in support of pastors keeping the tax exemption, which will not take effect until appeals efforts are exhausted.

LATE-TERM ABORTION BAN REJECTED IN ALBUQUERQUE

(WNS)--Citizens in Albuquerque, N.M., rejected the first ever referendum to ban abortion at a city level Tuesday. The Pain Capable Unborn Child Ordinance, modeled after the U.S. House of Representative's Fetal Pain Bill, would have banned abortions after 20 weeks. About 87,000 people voted in the special election, with the proposed ordinance losing 55 percent to 45 percent. More people participated in the special election than Albuquerque's mayoral election last month, which drew 70,000 voters.

U.S. ABORTIONS ON THE DECLINE, CDC SAYS

(WNS)--Abortions are on the decline in the United States, though numbers remain shockingly high in New York City, according to a CDC report released over Thanksgiving. The study used voluntary data from 44 states, New York City, and the District of Columbia. The states not included in the study didn't provide data for each of the ten years. From 2001 to 2010, the number of reported legal abortions in the United States fell by 9 percent. The number of teenagers getting abortions dropped most significantly, probably due in part to the overall drop in teenage pregnancies. For that 10-year period, the abortion rate among teenagers fell about 30 percent. The number of abortions in New York City alone remains incredibly high: 83,750 in 2010. That amounts to 694 abortions for every 1,000 live births. No other jurisdiction approaches that high of an abortion ratio. Other city health reports have shown that almost 40 percent of pregnancies in New York end in abortion. Most shocking in the CDC's New York numbers: 82 percent of abortions in the city were performed on African-American or Hispanic women.

MORE MARRIAGES CHILDLESS

(WNS)--According to the Los Angeles Times, "The percentage of married women ages 40 to 44 who had no biological children and no other kids in the household, such as adopted children or stepkids, reached 6 percent in the period between 2006 and 2010." In 1988, the number was 4.5 percent. One reason for the decline: young women want to have children but want to delay having them. When they are ready to have them, they find they are unable to.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS CHINA'S NEW POLICY: PRO-LIFE SHIFT OR PR STUNT?

(WNS)--China announced in November it will loosen family planning rules that limit most couples to a single child. Only a small percent of couples will benefit from the first change in decades to the policy, which still leaves intact a coercive system of forced sterilization and abortion. The changes were part of a key policy document following a four-day meeting of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders in mid-November. Families in which at least one parent is

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an only child will be allowed to have a second child. Previously, both parents had to be only children. Rural couples have been allowed two children if their first-born child was a girl. Introduced in 1980, the CCP claims the policy prevented 400 million births and helped lift countless families out of poverty. But the strict limits have led to widespread forced abortions and sterilizations by local officials, even though Beijing officially claims such measures are illegal. Couples who flout the rules face hefty fines, seizure of their property, and loss of their jobs.

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Gen. 1:28).

CHURCH OF ENGLAND REVERSES COURSE ON FEMALE LEADERSHIP

(WNS)--Leadership in the Church of England may soon include women. A mid-November vote by the General Synod cleared the way for a proposal that would allow women to be appointed as bishops, high-ranking church officers with jurisdiction over multiple parishes. The final vote on the proposal is likely to occur next year. The Church of England allowed women to become priests in 1992, but the role of bishop has so far remained open only to men. The 378-8 vote is a dramatic reversal from one year ago, when a proposal to ordain female bishops failed by six votes. Months of internal negotiations between traditional and progressive church leaders followed. The current proposal would offer some accommodations to more traditional parishes that might object to female authority, with an ombudsman to settle any disputes.

“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2).

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH THREATENS EXCOMMUNICATION TO GAY- FRIENDLY LAWMAKERS

(WNS)--A leading Greek Orthodox

bishop warns that lawmakers who vote in favor of legalizing same-sex marriage in Greece will be excommunicated from the church. The Guardian quotes the Metropolitan of Piraeus, Seraphim, as saying lawmakers “risk incurring the wrath of God” if they vote for homosexual partnerships. The bishop released a letter saying homosexuality is “an insult to God and man.” His letter also said, “I beseech you from the heart not to proceed. You will deny yourself the blessing of the most just Lord whose help and protection we daily need as much personally as nationally...during these critical times for our country.”



ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

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

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

The Liverpool Independent Baptist Church of Liverpool, New York (north of Syracuse) is searching

for a sovereign grace pastor. The church believes in the doctrines of grace, the local church, and is pretrib and pre-mil. Interested brethren should contact Bro. Greg Sigworth at (315) 677-3819.

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

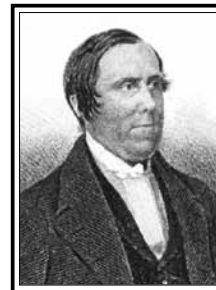
The Twinbrook Hills Baptist Church of Hamilton, OH is prayerfully seeking a pastor. Organized in 1938, the church holds to historic Baptist truths, including the Doctrines of Grace. Please visit the church's website at <http://twinbrook.net> to view the Church Constitution and other items that describe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

Any church that is without a pastor, please feel free to send your information in regards to the pastoral position for publication in these announcements.

The Book That Will Suit You; Or, A Word for Every One

By James Smith
(1802 - 1862)

THE
TESTIMONY
OF GOD
“I came to you.
..declaring...the
testimony of God”
(I Cor. 2:1).



The Gospel is not a cunningly devised fable, but the very Word of God; it is a divine testimony; a message from Jehovah to man. It comes direct

from Heaven, and is addressed to us in love. By the Gospel, God testifies to us, that we are totally and entirely lost by nature; that there is neither help nor hope for us but in the Lord Jesus Christ; but that in Him is all we need, or our circumstances require. He has pardon for all sin; a righteousness to justify the ungodly; peace for the troubled conscience; life for the dying soul; holiness for the impure and filthy; strength for the weak and languishing; in a word, a full salvation for the lost and perishing. He possesses all the wealth of God. He is able to make the foolish, wise; the guilty, just; the filthy, clean; the miserable, happy; the weak, strong; the diseased, healthy; the carnal, spiritual; and the slaves of Satan, the children of God. Christ, is all that God can give. Christ, has all that a sinner can want. Having Christ we can want no more; and, if we are taught by the Holy Spirit, we can be satisfied with no less.

The Gospel testifies, that we are welcome to all that the fulness of Christ contains, **“without money and without price.”** God has set no price upon gospel blessings, because they are invaluable; He has prescribed no conditions, but given a universal welcome. His words are, **“Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”** (Rev. 22:17). And the testimony declares, that believing---Christ, and all He has, becomes ours. We receive Him. We are entitled to all He has. We are interested in all He has done. His work is reckoned ours, for our justification; it is received as ours, to be the foundation of our hope; and it is pleaded as ours, and forms a prevailing plea with God. It becomes our joy, our boast, and our song in the house of our pilgrimage.

The Lord testifies, that true faith always produces penitence, and leads to holiness; the believing heart and the weeping eye go together. If we really believe, we daily repent; we cannot repent of sin, except we believe in Jesus; and we do not believe in Jesus, except we repent of sin. Faith produces godly sorrow, and godly sorrow leads to holiness of life. The stronger our faith, the deeper our penitence; and the deeper our repentance, the holier our life. Never be satisfied with faith without a broken heart; nor fancy that

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The Book That Will

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the heart is broken, except sin is bitter; and if sin is bitter to the soul, it will be sure to be forsaken. Faith and holiness are indisputable evidences of a title to Heaven. Faith purifies the heart, and the heart reforms the life.

You have heard the testimony of God, you have read it; but do you believe it? Do you perceive its great importance, and receive it into your heart, as a message of love coming direct from God to you? Do you heartily approve of it? Do you act upon it? If you reject the testimony, you treat God with contempt. If you deny the testimony, you give God the lie. If you postpone the consideration of it, you manifest the greatest folly. If you receive the testimony, you set to your seal that God is true. The testimony being sent, man is brought to the test. The testimony being rejected, the doom of man is sealed. Once more the testimony is placed before your eye, and presented to your heart; is it to be received, or rejected? DECIDE!

*"Sinner, attend, attend I pray,
Unto the Gospel Word;
Regard your visitation day,
And entertain the Lord.
'Give me thy heart,' the Saviour cries,
Justly He doth it claim;
Oh, do not then His call despise,
But give it to the Lamb."*

THE PROPOSAL AND PROMISE

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:29).

The yoke is the symbol of subjection and obedience. The Jews wore the yoke of Moses, and we by nature wear the yoke of Satan and of sin. We are all under a yoke, but Jesus proposes that we change masters, **"Take,"** He says, **"my yoke upon you."** Be my disciples, take your place at my feet, and learn of me. I will teach you doctrines, such as are suited to your state, and calculated to purify, elevate, and fill you with joy and peace. I will teach you to believe to the saving of the soul. I will instruct you to do the will of God from the heart. I will teach you to suffer with patience, fortitude, and hope. I will show you how to die in peace, and with



a blissful assurance of immortality. Be my servants, admit my authority, receive my word, aim to please me. **"I am meek and lowly in heart."** I am not anstere or unfeeling; but full of sympathy and love. I condescend to the lowest, I cast out none. Come, learn my character; come, prove my profession; come, try my service.

"Ye shall find rest unto your souls." There is not rest in the world. There is no repose in the service of sin. There is no peace to the sinner while distant from Jesus. **"The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."** But Jesus promises peace, and He gives rest to every one that takes and wears His yoke. Such find rest from those anxious, perplexing, and troublesome thoughts, which others are tried with and cannot conquer; such as, "Is there a God? What is His character? What is eternity? Can I be saved? How can I be accepted of God?" The disciples of Jesus know the Father; they rejoice in His character; they anticipate eternity as an infinite duration of pleasure and joy; they know the way of salvation, and

walk in it; and they feel the comfort of being accepted of God in the Beloved. They rest on the revelation God has given. They rest in the knowledge and enjoyment of truth. They rest by faith, and rejoice in hope.

They find rest from guilty fears, which arise and revel in the breasts of others. They look to the blood of Jesus, and obtain pardon; they trust in the word of promise, and feel safe; they draw near to God, and enjoy fellowship; and **"perfect love casteth out fear."** They rest from burdensome services, for what was once a toil, becomes a pleasure; what was felt to be a servant's duty, is enjoyed as the privilege of a beloved child. The very precepts seem to change their character, and only require what the soul approves, desires, and ardently longs to perform. The Sabbath of the Lord is a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable; a day of rest and sweet satisfaction. They find rest for the affections, on a worthy, suitable, and proper object; God in Christ is all they can desire or enjoy; and when the affections are fixed upon Him, they are satisfied, delighted, and fully employed. They find repose for

their hopes; they may expect until expectation can stretch no further, and yet there is more to be possessed and realized. They feel, that beneath the anchor of their hope there is a rock which will hold it firm for ever, and secure it amidst all the storms and tempests of this mortal life. They look through the glass of the Word, and see stretched before them the promised land, on which the sun of righteousness never sets, in which the fruits and flowers never fade or die; where the inhabitants never say, "I am sick," and whose glory is the perpetual presence of its God.

They find rest from anxious, worldly cares; the promises and providence of God being engaged for them; God himself being their Father, and Jesus, their Advocate, being before the throne, they feel that they can exercise implicit confidence in His care, and kindness; and they manage their affairs, in faith, looking up to the Lord in prayer, and expecting His sanction and blessing. The thirst for happiness, which is common to man, they find gratified; and the water which Jesus gives, which is the Holy Spirit, quenches, or rather satisfies this thirst, and they have within them a spring of living water; so that, as the wise man says, "The good man is satisfied from himself." In a word, they enjoy a general satisfaction of soul; they have in Jesus all they can want, they receive from Jesus all they need, they enjoy in the presence of Jesus comfort beyond any thing they ever found in the world, and look forward to the future, rejoicing that the present is the worst state they will ever be in, for before them all is bright and glorious.

Well, reader, what say you to the Saviour's proposal? Will you accept it? How will you treat the meek and lowly Saviour? He only seeks your welfare and your happiness. Will you try His yoke? Refuse, and you will have an eternity to repent of it, but repentance will be useless, and without relief.

*"Take His easy yoke, and wear it,
Love will make obedience sweet:
Christ will give you strength to bear it,
While His wisdom guides your feet
Safe to glory---
Where His ransom'd captives meet."*



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