

# The Berea Baptist Banner

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

## Where America Is Going

By Matthew Stepp  
of Wayne, West Virginia

Sometimes, the best place to look to see where we are going in the future, is to examine the cycles of history in our past. None of our political, economic, social or spiritual/moral problems are new to this old Earth. Countries have risen up, empires established and peoples have reached for power and greatness, only to disintegrate due to the vagaries of time and the weight of inexorable errors of human government. I would like to examine the parallel contrasts and constructs of the ancient



nation of Israel with the not-so-ancient nation of America.

As we begin in the book of Genesis, we find a patriarchal form of government by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Basically, a family, or tribe of people that would interact with other family groups in their area. Trade, social interaction, and political maneuvering were necessary for their existence. In Genesis 14, Abraham gets

◊ (Continued on page 8)

## Another Gospel

By Milburn R. Cockrell  
(1941 – 2002)

**"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-8).**

The expression "another gospel" in verse 6 in the original signifies "another sort of gospel" or a gospel different in kind from that



Paul preached. It is no second gospel, but no gospel at all. That is why Paul said: ". . . which is not another." In truth it was

a perversion of "the gospel of Christ." This false gospel differed so radically from the gospel which Paul preached that he invoked a curse on those who preached it.

The reference is clearly to the Judean Judaizers (Acts 15), who in a general sense had

◊ (Continued on page 2)

## A Grace That Is Not Grace

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia

The grace that Christianity teaches today is not grace at all. But, it is a perversion, that is the result of the unholy marriage of grace and works. This grace that the world teaches, is far more palatable to the world than what the true grace of God is. Therefore, in order to please the world; and



in order to gain a following; and in order to be considered successful in their ministries; Christianity, for the most part, espouses a

grace that is not grace.

Now, I want us to think about

◊ (Continued on page 11)

## Warnings Against Sexual Immorality

By Tom Ross  
of South Point, Ohio

### I Thessalonians 4: 1-8

Beginning with chapter four of First Thessalonians Paul shifts from the personal relationship that he shared with the saints, to practical exhortations as to how they should live. Paul tactfully deals with the deficiencies that were common among Gentile converts who had only recently been saved out of gross paganism.

He opens chapter four with exhortations concerning moral purity as well as stern warnings against sexual immorality. Sexual immorality in all of its forms was prevalent among the Gentiles



in Paul's day. Unchastity was not looked upon as a vice. Instead it was viewed as normal behavior by a majority of

Gentiles in Paul's day. In fact, it was not until Christianity began to spread that sexual immorality was viewed as improper and sinful behavior among the Gentile nations in the world. It is sad, but true, that sexual immorality is accepted as normal behavior in many circles of our modern day society. Yet God's Word makes it

◊ (Continued on page 7)

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

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

## Another Gospel

(Continued from page 1) ♡

come from James (Gal. 2:12), but they did not truly represent James at all (Acts 15:24). These perverters of the gospel taught faith plus law-works as the way of salvation. Paul preached salvation by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). According to Paul's way of thinking, the two were incompatible and must be antagonistic to the end (Rom. 11:6). The false gospel of the Judaizers destroyed "the grace of Christ" (Ga. 1:6) and taught a different way of justification and salvation. The false gospel denied the necessity of dependence on the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation and led to dependence on rites and ceremonies.

### THE ORTHODOX JEWS

The religious world is filled with sects and schisms who preach "another gospel." The orthodox Jews number about 12 million in the world. Just as in the day of Paul, they still teach salvation by human merit. Article 11 of the Jewish creed says: "I believe. . . that God will reward those who observe this law and will severely punish such as are guilty of the least violation of it. Eternal life is the best and greatest reward and damnation of the soul the most severe punishment."<sup>1</sup>

Orthodox Jews reject Jesus Christ as the Messiah and hold that He was a bastard. They see no mediator between God and man. They teach that immorality is the reward of God for individual righteousness. They indeed do preach "another gospel."

### HEATHEN RELIGIONS

All the heathen religions in the world have one thing in common: they teach salvation by human merit apart from the merits of

Jesus Christ.

Buddism has about 350 million adherents in nine countries. They say the means of salvation is to cease from all wrong doing, to get virtue, and to cleanse one's own heart. By transformation of the personality from bad conduct to good conduct one attains immortality.

There are about 300 million Confucianists in the world. The main teachings of this religion are: (1) The nature of man is good; (2) Man possesses free will to make choices; (3) Virtue brings its own reward. Here is another religion of human merit.

There are about 300 million Hindus in the world. They teach that by exercising thought and nerve control over many years the spirit of man can be united with the supreme creative spirit of the universe. This religion also teaches salvation by good works.

Islam has about 350 million followers on earth today. This religion, which started 600 years before Christ, teaches that in the after life the individual will be in Heaven or Hell according to his actions on earth. This is "another gospel."

### THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Catholicism is a Christianized form of heathenism. Catholicism did not come from the Bible but from Babylon. The faith of the Roman Catholic Church is the creed of Pius IV, issued after the council of Trent, with some additions. A part of this creed says: "I also profess that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the new law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and necessary for the salvation of mankind, though not all for every one--- to wit: baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance, extreme unction, holy orders, and

♡ (Continued on page 3)

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# Another Gospel

(Continued from page 2) ♦

matrimony; and that they confer grace; and that of these baptism, confirmation, and orders cannot be reiterated without sacrilege.”<sup>2</sup> Here again is salvation contingent on man’s works.

The Roman Catholic Church preaches baptismal regeneration; they preach a water gospel. The 1985 edition of The Church’s Confession of Faith says: “Through the merits of Jesus Christ, original sin is truly washed away in the sacrament of baptism. Baptism is the real regeneration through which we put aside the old man and put on the new one created according to God.”<sup>3</sup> On February 6, 1976, Pope Paul said to a general audience at the Vatican that the “real birthday of a Christian is the day of his baptism.”<sup>4</sup>

The Greek Catholic Church also affirms the water gospel. They say: “Holy baptism is the appointed sacrament of salvation, by which all past sins are washed away, and without which there is no promise of salvation.”<sup>5</sup>

One of the fundamental articles of the Catholic gospel is that people are regenerated by baptism. They go so far as to say dying infants without baptism cannot go to Heaven. This theory of the Great Whore (the Catholic Church) is anti-scriptural and is surely “another gospel.”

Those who know history know that the idea of baptismal regeneration originated among the ancient devil-worshippers of Babylon centuries before the Christian Era. The Babylonian priests “led their votaries to believe that, if they only passed through the baptismal waters. . . that would make them. . . twice-born’ or ‘regenerative’.”<sup>6</sup>

## PROTESTANTS PREACH

## ANOTHER GOSPEL

Most Protestant churches have one thing in common with the Catholic Church. They are all agreed that baptism saves or helps save. They connect the gospel of Christ with a water gospel. In this respect the harlot daughters bear the likeness of their mother. This is not some groundless charge, but a well-established fact which I shall prove to those who want to know the truth.

The Episcopal Church of England (the English Catholics) hold to baptismal regeneration--a perversion of the gospel of Christ. Every one confirmed in this church is required to give the following answer to the bishop, after giving to him their Christian names:

Question: “Who gave thee this name?”

Answer: “My sponsors in baptism, wherein I was made a heir of God, a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the kingdom of God.”<sup>7</sup>

Article XXVII of the thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England says: “Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened; but it is also a sign of Regeneration, or New Birth; whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly, are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed, and grace increased, by virtue of prayer unto God. The Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.”<sup>8</sup>

The Augsburg Confession is the official confession of the Lutheran

Church. Article IX declares: “It is taught among us that Baptism is necessary and that grace is offered through it. Children, too, should be baptized, for in Baptism they are committed to God and become acceptable to him. On this account the Anabaptists who teach that infant baptism is not right are rejected.”<sup>9</sup>

The Small Catechism of Martin Luther of 1529, Section IV, has the following:

“What gifts or benefits does Baptism bestow?”

“Answer: It effects forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and grants eternal salvation to all who believe, as the Word and promise of God declares.”<sup>10</sup>

John Wesley, the father and founder of the Methodist Church, held to a water gospel. Preaching on “The Marks of the New Birth,” he said: “And if ye have been baptized, your only hope is this, that those who were made the children of God by baptism, but are now children of the devil, may yet again receive ‘power to become the sons of God;’ that they may receive again what they have lost, even the ‘spirit of adoption, crying in their hearts, Abba, Father!’”<sup>11</sup>

Still again, preaching on “The New Birth,” he declared: “. . . it is certain our church supposes, that all who are baptized in their infancy, are at the same time born again; and it is allowed that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition.”<sup>12</sup>

Even the Presbyterians, who profess to believe in salvation by sovereign grace, show their kinship to the Great Whore when it comes to baptism. After going so far in the Westminster Confession in 1646, Chapter XXVIII, to affirm that some may be saved without baptism, they still make some very confusing

statements that sound like the Great Whore. They say in Chapter XXVIII, Section I, that baptism is “a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins. . .”<sup>13</sup> Then in Section IV they declare that “the infants of both believing parents are to be baptized.” If baptism is the seal of the covenant of grace as they affirm, are they not saying that it saves? If baptism does not regenerate little babies, then why baptize them?

Then to make bad matters worse in Section VI they say: “. . . by the right use of this ordinance the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto. . .”<sup>14</sup>

Thus it should be evident to all that Protestants do not preach the pure gospel of Christ. They all mix human merit in baptism with the merits of Christ, going so far as to baptize babies so as to regenerate them! To make baptism the actual cause of salvation is to preach “another gospel.” Any person who fails to see this after reading their confessions of faith is blind and cannot see afar off.

## CAMPBELLITES AND THE CULTS

Campbellites are honest and truthful enough to admit that they believe in “the gospel in water.” Alexander Campbell, their father and founder, taught baptismal regeneration as much as any Catholic or Protestant. In The Christian System (Campbell’s theology book) he said: “For if immersion be equivalent to regeneration, and regeneration be the same import with being born again, then being born again and being immersed are the same thing. . .”<sup>15</sup> This is “another

♦ (Continued on page 4)

# Another Gospel

(Continued from page 3) ♦

gospel,” a gospel borrowed from Catholicism and Protestantism who borrowed it from the Devil worshippers of ancient Babylon.

Time and space will permit me to examine only a few of the cults. They all have one thing in common; they all preach salvation by man’s works rather than the finished work of Christ. Consider a few of these with me.

Christian Science teaches: “Man is saved through Christ, through Truth, Life, and Love as demonstrated by the Galilean Prophet in healing the sick and overcoming sin and death”<sup>16</sup> To them Christ is not the Way to Heaven, but “the Way-shower.”

Spiritism says: “Man becomes his own savior.”<sup>17</sup> The Jehovah (False) Witnesses hold that “no man can gain life or receive life everlasting unless he believes God and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and asks for salvation by making an unconditional agreement to do the will of God.”<sup>18</sup> Mormonism teaches the water gospel: “The priesthood of Aaron. . . holds the keys of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.”<sup>19</sup> I could go on, but I will not.

## RELIGIOUS LIBERALS

Religious liberals preach “another gospel.” They say consecrated Christians are too busy about deeds of love and justice to give thought to their own selfish salvation. To them all are sons of God and will be saved. They scorn the vicarious atonement of Christ and say the sacrificial idea is the height of foolishness. Most of them would replace the gospel of Christ by a Marxian socialism.

The only gospel religious liberals preach is the social gospel. They ignore the disease of sin and deal

with its symptoms. They hate the doctrine of total depravity and would do away with the new birth. They substitute reformation for regeneration. They are more concerned about a fine house for people on earth than in Heaven. They talk about good wages here instead of a reward in Heaven, and they speak of the welfare of man’s body rather than his soul. In the main they stress salvation from poverty, hard times and obscurity rather than salvation from sin. Plainly, their social gospel is “another gospel.”

## ARMINIAN BAPTISTS?

Baptists since their beginning in the first century have held to the doctrines of grace. Not until after the Protestant Reformation did any Baptists hold to Arminianism. These were called General Baptists in England. They were a separate group from the Particular Baptists. Some of the General Baptists came to America. Then there was the appearance of the Free Will Baptists. Here is the beginning of apostasy in Baptist churches. These people began to make salvation contingent on man’s free will instead of the free grace of God. This was and still is a perversion of the gospel of Christ.

Baptists in America and most other countries now seem to be halted between two opinions. Most of them find themselves some place between what we might term “Arminianism” and “Calvinism.” About the only point that most Baptists today have in common with the Baptists of the past is eternal security. The Baptists of the past believed in the preservation of the Savior and the perseverance of the saints. The modern doctrine of eternal security is a far cry from what the old Baptists taught. Modern-day Baptists have so distorted the

doctrine of eternal security until it amounts to security in sin for unregenerate hypocrites, of which their churches are filled to the brim.

There still remains many Baptists who preach the gospel to some degree, and people are being saved under their preaching. It cannot be denied that some sovereign grace men living today were saved under the preaching of such men. But this is a far cry from affirming that all Baptists today are preaching the true gospel of Christ. God sometimes blesses His Word in spite of some disobedience. God gave water from the rock even though Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it. But we must not take the position that God blesses heresy as much as the truth, for if He does, there is no need to preach the truth.

According to my text, **“another gospel”** is a perversion of the gospel of Christ. Many Arminian Baptists are guilty of perverting the gospel of Christ in a number of ways. First, some of them preach “another Jesus.” They say Christ loves every person in the world and desires their salvation, but the Christ of the Bible desires the salvation only of His elect. They say Christ is trying to save all men and does all in his power to save them, but men won’t let Christ save them. The Christ of the Bible effectually calls His elect unto salvation. Arminian Baptists say that Christ cannot regenerate a person until that person first chooses Christ with his “free will.” The gospel of grace teaches that God regenerates His elect and gives them faith to believe the gospel. Paul declares: **“For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have**

**not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him”** (II Cor. 11:4).

Most modern-day Baptists do not preach repentance. Lost sinners are told to receive the gift of eternal life without turning from sin. Easy believism allows a man to think he is saved while continuing in his sins. The Bible says nothing about God saving impenitent sinners. God will not put away your sins if you do not put them away. The true gospel teaches that Christ saves His people from their sins, not in their sins (Matt. 1:21). To tell men to believe and ignore man’s need of repentance is un-Christian (Mark 1:15).

Many Baptists today pervert faith. To them faith is a natural ability which every person possesses and may exercise at his own pleasure. The gospel of grace teaches that faith is the gift of God (Acts 18:27; Eph. 1:19-20; 2:8-9; Phil. 1:29; Col. 2:12; Tit. 1:1; Heb. 12:2). Many Baptists think faith is a nod of the head to a series of facts, but the gospel of free grace teaches that true faith is receiving Christ in all His offices (John 1:12) and following Him (Ga. 5:6; Jas. 2:20; Heb. 5:9). True faith has some works to prove that it exists.

Surely there is a vast difference between a Baptist who preaches that Christ wants to save and can’t save because almighty man won’t let Him, and a Baptist who preaches that God really and truly does save His own elect. Arminians preach a savior who cannot save, an atonement which does not atone for sin, a satisfaction which does not satisfy, a redemption which does not redeem, and a reconciliation which does not reconcile. Arminians present a disappointed God, a defeated

♦ (Continued on page 5)



# Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of  
Plant City, Florida



## Why Trouble Ye the Woman?

**“When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon me” (Matt. 26:10).**

Oh my soul, can this be said of you? Are you one who troubles those who are working a good work upon the Savior? Are you one who hinders those who are about the Lord's work? Are you one who when the Lord opens a door are the first to say “NO! We cannot do it?” or “here are all the reasons why we cannot do the work of the Lord?”

You will notice, that when we compare Scripture-with-Scripture we find that Judas Iscariot was the one who started this line of thought. **“Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein” (John 12:4-6).** We read in Matthew 26:8 that all the disciples had indignation. **“But when his disciples saw it, THEY [emphasis is NRH] had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.”**

Oh how sad that the disciples were following the words of a lost man, the man who had betrayed their Lord. Notice that Judas

Iscariot did not care for the poor. Yet the disciples were carried away with his way of thinking. They were filled with indignation toward the woman. They were filled with “a violent irritation” [Vine] because this woman “wrought a good work upon the Savior.”

The Lord says that they troubled her. And if the Lord says that they troubled her then it is so. The word **“trouble”** denotes “a beating” (Strong), “embarrass a person by giving occasion for anxiety, as some disciples did to the woman with the ointment, perturbing her spirit by their criticisms” (Vine). So we see that their words to her were a metaphorical beating upon her.

Why are we critical of those who have “wrought a good work upon the Savior?”

Her work was upon the Savior. There is no better work than to work upon Him. Was it not said that certain prophets and teachers in Antioch ministered unto the Lord? **“Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13:1-2).** Who is our work upon? Is it upon the poor? Is it upon self? or are we ministering to the Lord?

Instead of troubling those

with our indignation who have “wrought a good work upon the Savior,” let us join in.



## Another Gospel

*(Continued from page 4) ♦*

Holy Spirit, and a deficient Christ. Surely such persons are guilty of preaching “another gospel.” Surely there is a great gulf between those who preach such a gospel and those who preach the reverse. It is a grave error to say there is no difference between the gospel that Arminian Baptists preach and that which is preached by sovereign grace Baptists!

The whole world of Christendom can be divided into two groups: Calvinists and Arminians, or free willers and free gracers. Catholics, Protestants, Campbellites, the cults, and even heathen religions are Arminians; they all teach salvation by human merit. In saying that Arminians preach the gospel as well as those who hold the doctrine of grace is not according to facts. It displays gross ignorance of what religious sects teach, of what the true gospel really is, and of Baptist history. If some mean by this statement that some Arminian Baptists preach the gospel, then let them be honest and truthful and say so and end the confusion. But to say that Arminians preach the gospel as well as sovereign gracers is to affirm that Catholics and Campbellites preach the same gospel we do. Any man that cannot tell the difference between what Baptists and Catholics preach is to be greatly pitied and prayed for. If all preach the same gospel then there is no such thing as “another gospel,” although the Bible says that there is a false gospel.

No doubt God has some of

His elect in all nations and in all denominations who have heard and believed the gospel of Christ. They heard enough of the Word to know that they were lost and that Christ died to save sinners. Charles Spurgeon was saved by the speaking of a Methodist layman. Many Baptists were saved under the preaching of George Whitefield, a Calvinistic Methodist. Some in Catholic and Protestant churches have heard the true gospel from some truly saved person or by reading the Scriptures (John 20:31; II Tim. 3:15). But, comparatively speaking, this number is very small, for most Catholics and Protestants hold to baptismal regeneration.

I would also go far enough to say that it is wrong to assume that all Sovereign Grace, Independent, Landmark Baptist people are saved. Even some of these have never heard and believed the true gospel. Not all Arminians are saved and a good many sovereign gracers are no better off. Only those who are the elect of God and have been effectually called of God are saved.

## TRUE BAPTISTS ARE UNIQUE

Ever since the beginning of time the true gospel has been preached in the world by the witnesses of Heaven. New Testament churches have always preached the true gospel from the apostolic age until now. It is also true that the false gospel has been preached ever since the days of Cain by the witnesses of Hell. Ever since the beginning of the Christian Era until now false churches have been preaching **“another gospel.”** There has never been at any time in history, past or present, when all preached the true gospel or the same gospel.

*♦ (Continued on page 6)*

# Another Gospel

(Continued from page 5) ♦

True Baptists have always preached that man is saved by the grace of God and the blood of Jesus alone without any admixture of works on man's part. They have always denied that baptism saves or helps to save a man's soul. This truth has always distinguished them from Protestants and Catholics. It has also distinguished them from the cults and the heathen religions of the world. Any time that a professed Baptist begins to teach salvation by free will instead of free grace he has ceased to be a Baptist and becomes a Christianized heathen! Any attempt to add the least bit of human merit to the merits of Christ causes a professed Baptist to embrace the doctrine of Roman Catholicism!

The Anabaptists of Europe put forth a book called Antichrist, in which they said this: "A third work of Antichrist is this, that he attributes the regeneration of the Holy Spirit unto the mere external act of baptism, baptizing infants in that faith, teaching that thereby baptism and regeneration must be had, on which principle he confers and bestows, and, indeed grounds all his Christianity, which is contrary to the word of the Holy Scriptures."<sup>20</sup> This book was discovered in A.D. 1120, but it was written long before that time.

In A.D. 1120 the Waldenses put forth a confession of faith. Article 12 says: "We do believe that the sacraments are signs of the holy thing, or visible forms of the invisible grace, accounting it good that the faithful sometimes use the said signs or visible forms, if it may be done. However, we believe and hold, that the above said faithful may be saved without receiving the signs aforesaid, in

case they have no place nor any means to use them."<sup>21</sup>

While Catholics were teaching baptismal regeneration in the Dark Ages the Anabaptists and Waldenses were preaching the gospel of sovereign grace and leaving a trail of blood. God has never been left without a witness for the true gospel.

## CONCLUSION

What should be our attitude toward those who preach "another gospel"? Let us reject this false gospel and those who preach it. Let us treat this perversion of the gospel with abhorrence, no matter with what rank, talent, or eloquence a man may preach it. Do not ever hear an angel from Heaven if he preaches another gospel and another Jesus. All such preachers are under the curse of God. Heaven forbids that we bless those God has cursed.

A false gospel is not as good as a true gospel. The most dangerous heresy in the world is a little error mixed with a great deal of truth. Let us pray much and study hard that we may preach a pure gospel and not lead men into error. Sinners are saved by the preaching of the gospel of sovereign grace and the blood of Jesus Christ. Brethren, let us preach free grace, not free will.

The modern-day gospel has no good news. It presents a Christ who wants to save and lacks the power to do so. It has no joyful sound, no glad tidings, and it gives no peace of mind and conscience. Let us shout to the hills and let our voice echo to the valleys that salvation is not by man's will, words, works, or worthiness. It is wholly and solely of the Lord on the basis of the obedience and death of Christ! Tell sinners far and wide that Jesus saves!

## NOTES

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# Warnings Against

(Continued from page 1) ♦

very clear that sexual immorality in all of its forms is evil and sinful. The only lawful sexual relationship that is accepted by God is between husband and wife as Hebrews 13:4 declares: **“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”**

## HOW SAINTS ARE TO WALK vv. 1-2

**“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus”** (I Thess. 4:1-2).

1. Paul requests and exhorts the believers at Thessalonica to remember how they are to walk as Christians. He exhorts them to continue in the things that he had taught them while he was among them, the teachings that they had received while he was there. It is the duty of ministers not only to preach the necessity of salvation through faith in the Gospel, but also to instruct in matters of morality and Christian living. It is an unbalanced ministry indeed that only focuses upon salvation without instruction concerning holy living.

2. It is interesting that Paul would use the term **“walk”** to describe the Christian life. Walking implies life, for a dead sinner cannot walk in the commandments of God. Walking implies progress and advancement. Walking also implies liberty, for a person who is bound is unable to walk. Walking demands light because an individual would only stumble and fall in darkness. Thus the

**“walk”** of the Christian is to be one of spiritual life, growth in grace, obedience in the light of God’s commands, and one of freedom and joy in Jesus Christ. This is how we are to walk.

Christians are to walk and order their steps in such a manner that they are pleasing to God. The entire thrust and purpose of the Christian life is to live in such a way that we are pleasing in the light of God. All of our thoughts, words, and deeds should be governed by the glory of God. Our desire should be to please God in all that we do. If all of our behavior were governed by the simple question: “Does what I am doing please God?” we would all be more careful to live holy lives. Psalms 119:133 declares: **“Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.”** If we would daily make a practical application of this prayer in our lives we would live a life that is pleasing unto God. If we are to walk in a manner that pleases God we should follow the examples of Enoch, who walked with God in faith and communion (Heb. 11:5), and Jesus Christ who always did those things which pleased the Father. The walk of Jesus Christ was one of complete obedience to the holy law of God. We would do well if we followed His holy example. Jesus walked in obedience, humility, meekness, and followed a path of self denial and suffering for the good of others. We are commanded to follow His unselfish walk in I John 2:5-6 which states: **“But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”**

4. Our Christian walk should be one of steady advancement

and growth in grace. Paul told his readers to abound more and more meaning that they were to progress in the Christian life. We are not to be satisfied with the status quo, or with the standards and opinions of men when it comes to spirituality. We ought to always desire to be growing and advancing in spiritual maturity and faithfulness.

5. In verse two Paul reminds them of the commandments he gave them by the authority of Christ while he was among them. He had instructed them in the art of holy living while he ministered among them. He wants them to remember the things he had taught them and obey the principles that he had set forth. Preaching and teaching will have little or no impact upon people unless they begin to practice what is taught. Think of all the instruction that we have been privileged to receive as Christians, and then think of how little of the truth we actually apply in our daily lives. James 1:21-22 declares our solemn duty as Christians: **“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”** If we are to walk as Christians that are pleasing in the sight of our gracious Father then we must strive to obey the admonition of II Timothy 2:19 which states: **“...Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”**

## EXHORTATIONS TO SEXUAL PURITY vv. 3-6

**“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;**

**Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified”** (I Thess. 4:3-6)

1. In verse three Paul plainly states that the revealed will of God is to abstain from sexual uncleanness and immorality in all of its forms. Whether it be fornication, adultery, homosexuality, incest, or lustful thoughts, all are expressly forbidden in the Word of God. If we are to live a life that is set apart and consecrated for the glory of God we must not indulge in unlawful sexual desires and passions, but rather we must abstain from them. Our society abounds in sexual temptation and uncleanness. If we are to be in a condition to be used in the service of God we must abstain from sexual immorality. Several Scriptures clearly rebuke and condemn the sins associated with sexual immorality. I Corinthians 6:18 declares: **“Flee Fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.”** Ephesians 5:3 states: **“But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.”** Colossians 3:5 declares: **“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”** Nothing defiles the body, soul, and spirit of a believer more than sexual sin. Nothing sears the conscience, unfits for service, and causes more guilt than sexual immorality and impurity.

♦ (Continued on page 8)



# Warnings Against

(Continued from page 7) ♦

Therefore we must abstain from the fleshly lusts which war against the soul if we are going to live a sanctified life for God.

2. The manner in which we are to guard against sexual impurity and immorality is set forth in verses four and five. We are to know how we are to possess our bodies as though they were set apart for the honor of Almighty God. I believe one of the best ways in which to curb sexual immorality is for men and women to remember that our bodies belong to God. That means our eyes should not be looking upon others with lust in our hearts. Job 31:1 declares: **"I made a covenant with mine eyes: why then should I think upon a maid?"** Job understood the relationship between looking and lustful thoughts. Jesus also believed there was a relationship between looking and lusting in Matthew 5:28 which states: **"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."** We must learn to control what our eyegate takes in if we are to successfully combat sexual impurity. Unfaithfulness, infidelity, and sexual immorality begins with an unlawful look, progresses to lustful thoughts, and finds fulfillment in the sinful act. Our society is saturated with sexual temptation and shameless immodesty. Each time we are confronted with the temptation to sin we must remember that we belong to God and that our bodies are to be used for those things which glorify Him.

I like what John Gill wrote in his commentary:

"So then, for a man to possess his vessel in sanctification and

honor, is to keep under his body and bring it into subjection, and preserve it in purity and chastity; as the eyes from unchaste looks, the tongue from unchaste words, and the other members from unchaste actions; and to use it in an honorable way, not in fornication, adultery, and sodomy; for by fornication, a man sins against his own body; and by adultery he gets a wound, and a dishonor, and a reproach that will not be wiped away; and by sodomy and such like unnatural lusts, men dishonor their own bodies between themselves."

3. The sin of adultery involves defrauding another individual. When a man commits adultery with another man's wife he is defrauding or cheating the man she is married to. The same is true if a woman commits adultery. The seventh commandment plainly states: **"Thou shalt not commit adultery."** Those who engage in such illicit sexual activities will be judged by God. The lost person will be judged by spending an eternity in the Lake of Fire as Revelation 21:8 declares: **"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."** Only the blood of Jesus Christ can wash away the defiling stain of sexual immorality. His blood has the power to justify the believer from all things.

Believers who engage in sexual immorality are judged by way of chastisement and loss of usefulness. All one has to do is look at the life of David after he committed adultery with Bathsheba to find out the consequences of sexual impurity

in the life of a believer. David was never the same. He was chastised the remainder of his life. Oh that Christians would take heed and beware of the defiling nature of sexual immorality!

**CALLED TO HOLINESS vv.**

**7-8**

**"For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit"** (I Thess. 4:7-8).

1. Verse seven is another reason why the saints of God are not to engage in sexual immorality of any kind. God has called us out of uncleanness, not unto it. He has called us out of the darkness and depravity of our sinful lifestyles to live a life of holiness and purity. We are not to live like those whose lives have never been changed by the power of Almighty God. Further we are called upon to live a life of holiness. I Peter 1:14-16 declares: **"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."** The Thessalonian believers were to demonstrate to those dwelling in darkness that God had called them by His grace through a life dedicated to moral purity and fellowship with God. Immorality and sexual uncleanness are inconsistent with God's gracious call to salvation.

2. In verse eight a solemn warning is given. Those who reject God's teaching concerning holiness and abstinence from sexual impurity and immorality are despising and rejecting the revealed will of God. This is a serious charge indeed. Paul

wanted the Thessalonian believers to realize that if they rejected his warnings and exhortations with regards to sexual immorality they were despising God Himself. The words Paul wrote were divinely inspired to be regarded and obeyed as such.

3. Finally, Paul shows the inconsistency of living an unclean life. God has been gracious enough to give us the Holy Spirit to indwell, to instruct, and to guide us. The Holy Spirit is pure and righteous. Since He lives within a believer that individual ought to do nothing that would offend the holiness and purity of the Holy Spirit. We are responsible to live holy lives because the Holy Spirit dwells within. To go on living in impurity is a direct insult to God and a grievous sin against the Holy Spirit. May God grant each one of us the grace to see how sinful sexual immorality is as well as our responsibility to live holy lives consecrated unto God.



## Where America

(Continued from page 1) ♦

involved in a local war of nine city-kings when Lot is captured, and God is with him as he arms his servants and via a nighttime raid routs the enemy and rescues his nephew. Isaac and Jacob, also kept this unified family in a position of power and respect as we read the intervening chapters. In Chapter 34, Jacob rues the rashness of his sons, as they destroy a neighbor and spoiled his city because the Shechemites had defiled their sister Dinah. As this growing family of 12 sons and an unknown number of daughters became a power to be reckoned with, we can start to consider them a nation, as God certainly

♦ (Continued on page 9)



# Where America

(Continued from page 8) ♡  
does.

Here in America, as colonists came by the boatload in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, they also became political, economic and social forces to be reckoned with by the native Indians and also the European monarchs. To ignore the growing independent factions, would be to old Europe's peril. God certainly has a purpose to His blessings. **"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths"** (Pro. 3:5-6). Each of the original 13 colonies, not just Massachusetts and the pilgrims, have their roots in Christians fleeing persecution in Europe and following God's leadership in coming to America.

Then, as Jacob takes his tribal nation to Egypt in Genesis 46, the sheer weight of numbers as the family grew, multiplied and expanded into 12 semi-nations under each son (rather than single lineage), we see a breaking down of the single patriarchal head into basically the 12 tribal heads. A split patriarchal leadership, as it were.

Probably similar to the 13 colonies here in America, with their individual charters, but still tied together by the far-off monarch in England, the 12 tribes in Egypt were still tied together by their "far-off," now dead father Jacob/Israel. God was a singular continuity in both Colonial America and Israel, and some might say more obviously direct in the latter, but it is really not so. God was just as intimately involved in the roots and beginnings of the United States of America, as He was in the

formation of the Nation of Israel. He has purposes and decrees for both of these great nations! As we read and study the writings of the founding fathers here in America, they are not hesitant to call upon God to support their worthy causes of liberty and religious freedom. And to study the events of our American heritage is to see the hand of God blessing, guiding, and sometime working miraculously, both in nature and in the hearts of kings and kingdoms.

As the Israelites, in large part, left God to serve Egyptian gods, they fell into bondage. **"Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt"** (Ezek. 20:7-9). As a growing multitude, they still had no organized leadership, until God sent Moses and Aaron to establish a visible head to address the political and moral issues necessary for justice and common welfare. So too, did the American colonies find themselves slipping into bondage to the tyranny and oppression of England in the person of George III. It is no coincidence that the Great Awakening of the middle 18<sup>th</sup> Century gave great boldness

and divine insight into the necessary deeds that would need to be accomplished to embark on the enormous enterprise that would become the greatest nation of the western hemisphere. The need for nation-wide leadership was taken up by Washington, Madison, the Adams' cousins, Franklin, etc. Framed within such early American documents as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were the liberties of the people, primarily through regulation and restriction of government power. [A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.] And then, I love how this is phrased. [Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, etc...] *"Let My people go!"* Whether it be Pharaoh, George III or oppressive Big Brother government in Washington, DC.

In Exodus 3, this freedom led to a theocracy-type government for Israel, with Moses being merely the prophet and mouthpiece of Jehovah. In America at the culmination of the American Revolution, via the efforts of Congress, a presidency was formed, that would execute the matters of justice, co-governing with congress, by the will of the people, in these elected positions. God's blessings upon each of these infant nations is seen by explosive growth and a forging of their unique Godly heritages. They are ultimately both unified by religious and moral convictions based in the Word of God, that Moses began to pen and that Americans continued to revere throughout these eras of unrivaled growth!

After the successful consolidation of power by God into the Levitical priesthood and the conquest of Canaan (in varying degrees of success) by Joshua, Israel settles down and actually regresses after the death of Joshua into a more tribal patriarchy again during the period of the judges. America seemingly goes the opposite way, with the war between the states ultimately consolidating more power in the Federal Government, and with the eventual loss of state power to the point of little real authority any longer at the lower levels of government.

As God is nationally rejected, things go bad in both economies, with the Nation of Israel falling into bondage in cycles throughout the 300 years of the judges, and God faithfully bailing out His people, before they forget Him and fall into idolatry yet again. America, going the same route by a different path (amazing, this total depravity of man), also forgets the God of her roots and bounty and starts serving the idols of Humanism and Evolutionism. Looking at the departure of America from her roots, during the chaotic 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the primary devices of Satan are clearly seen in the destruction of the family unit and the intrusion of government welfare systems into the realms that need to be taken care of by fathers and mothers. With families broken by easy divorce, teen pregnancy and the rampant immorality that is the source of these viral symptoms, we Americans have become an easy prey for ruin and devastation. Evolution has effectively hamstrung our institutions of higher learning, as well, and without an understanding of God's creative power, science has

♡ (Continued on page 10)

# Where America

(Continued from page 9) ♦

regressed into establishments that twist data to support an aging and fallacious theory that will never be proved, but will always have Athiestic champions, that deny the evidence of Intelligent Design, merely to satisfy their religion of Humanism and to prop up their inglorious rebellion against the God that created them.

At any rate, both countries finally become desperate and desire a king. Samuel, as the final judge, is ordained by God to anoint King Saul, and is ordered to warn the people of the dangers (that America is learning the hard way) in reposing too much authority in a single man. In I Samuel 8, everything from the draft, to the IRS, to women's lib is covered by the prescient wisdom of God, via His last judge. America, also desperate to try to sustain its welfare system, desires a king. The recent administrations thereby gaining and consolidating more and more power through executive acts and policies. Truly America needs to wake up to see the direction it is taking, as she turns her back upon the God that has so richly blessed her, in both origin and blessing in becoming a benevolent Superpower of grace and goodness to this wretched and squalling world of tyrants and dictators.

God intervenes for Israel and graces and gifts them with good King David, as a forerunner of the inevitable arrival of the KING of Kings and LORD of Lords in His chosen nation of Israel. The theistic monarchy thus paving the way for the glory of King Solomon's reign, with the Temple of God, being the central masterpiece that holds the kingdom together, as long as the people will remain

faithful to her God. That happens (again) in cycles and varying degrees of success through the next few generations, with the decrees of God being carried out, first in judgment and bondage to Assyria and Babylon, then in restoration of Jerusalem and her temple under Ezra and Nehemiah, thereby laying the groundwork for the ultimate appearance of the prophesied and eternally ordained Messiah to come and to be a propitiation for the sins of the world. **"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass"** (Zech. 9:9).

America, having no revealed destiny in God's Word, will continue to fall away from God's will under her latest line of kings (outside of the grace of God) until the cycle of judgment is complete unto either destruction by a foreign power or reconstruction into more localized state level governments again, similar to the retro-style government of the Judges/Colonial eras, or possibly even total obliteration. But, I can find instances of God's grace being extended to Gentile nations, like Jonah's Assyrian Ninevites, European nations that embraced the Anabaptist causes in the Middle Ages, and even Elizabethan England. Surely prophesied by Isaiah 19, in the yet future we can find grace bestowed upon the ancient Middle Eastern nations of Assyria and Egypt. So, if God might be gracious to our current generation, by causing more of our national leaders to reclaim the cause of Christ, it would not be unprecedented for the long suffering of God to providentially return America

to a position of prominence and glory.

Unfortunately, Israel of the First Century, instead of Claiming her King, the Jews crucified our Lord Jesus Christ, thus fulfilling more of God's prophecies and eternal decrees. They thereby secure for themselves millennia of Diaspora, no government, at all, except for the oppressive hands of foreign bondage, yet again. **"Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come"** (Ezek. 11:16).

But, the signs are being revealed of the restoration, yet again as we look into the future via the Holy Word of God. (Romans 11) God will not forsake His people! **"Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel"** (Ezek. 11:17). 1948 put the wheels in motion for a sovereign state, and a democratic government of secular Jews has been put in place for the Lord to work out the end time eschatology events. First, the Rapture, to be quickly followed by the Great Tribulation, with the ultimate Battle of Armageddon, where the great King Jesus will appear and judge the nations of this world and set up the greatest kingdom this world has ever seen for 1000 Millennial years of righteous and holy rule with a rod of iron.

The Battle of Gog and Magog upon the release of the bound Satan, will culminate into the White Throne Judgment and the dissolution of corruption

that will reforge the Earth as the elements will melt with fervent heat and a New Heaven and a New Earth will come into being by the creative power of God. And the Eternal Ages will roll on in serenity in the land of glory of Heaven, but only eternal torment and perdition in an unending Hell by every soul that rejects the kingship of Jesus Christ. **"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. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this"** (Isa. 9:6-7).

Governments! Selah! Think about it! A solemn warning to nations of all ages is to see the lessons of history. God has raised up governments and pulled them down. We must recognize the vital imperative to trust in the Lord and to again reassert our worship of the one, true God of Israel and the Lord Jesus Christ as the Head of His churches in this time of the Gentiles. God is working out His will and decrees. We need to submit ourselves unto that sovereign, omnipotent will and He will certainly bless us. **"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance"** (Ps. 33:12). America, just like Israel, has only one hope, Jesus Christ! Selah! Think about it!



# The Noted Pastor



By Todd  
Bryant  
of  
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## Are You Truly A Disciple of Jesus?

**“The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master”** (Luke 6:40).

Discipleship is rarely discussed these days. As I was considering this subject I kept asking myself, “Have we even related to our people what a disciple is?” I am not sure we have. We talk about disciples when we preach on the commission. We may talk about older believers mentoring younger ones. But do church members today know what it truly means to be a disciple?

In the Gospels, the Bible refers to the group following Jesus as **“disciples”** far more than any other term. Jesus is the Teacher. Those sitting at His feet are the disciples. Simple enough, right? But, what is a disciple? Is it a person becoming a carbon copy of their spiritual mentor? Is it a person just making sure they have got the ordinances right? Is it somebody striving to live up to the church covenant? Let me quickly say no and we ought to know better because this is not some deep theological truth.

The Greek word from which we get our English word disciple is *mathētēs*. Over 260 times, this word is translated **“disciple”** in

our English Bibles. In the simplest of terms, it simply means “learner.” So, Jesus is the Teacher. We are learners of Jesus from Jesus. The writer of Hebrews tells us plainly that God has **“in these last days spoken unto us by his Son”** (Heb. 1:2). We are then learners of Jesus from Jesus. Now, one may say, “Well, Jesus ain’t here!” And, in the bodily sense, that is true. However, He has left us His Word. As the Bible has been written, the teachings of Jesus have been put into writing. We have the ministry of Jesus written down through the pen of Biblical writers as God breathed His Word through them (II Timothy 3:16-17). So, Jesus remains the Teacher while we are the learners.

I am not sure the average church member realizes that being a disciple means they are supposed to be learning constantly about Jesus and His ministry. By definition, I am a conservative. I am not, I hope, a hyper-conservative. However, by today’s standards, I am a conservative because the Bible is a conservative book. I do not want to be more conservative than the Bible or more liberal than the Bible. I honestly just want to be Biblical. However, most would call me a conservative. The tendency, as a conservative, is to point people only to “being right” as if that somehow makes them a disciple by default. However, that would be an incorrect understanding of what it means to be a disciple. While we do want to be correct about our theological positions, that does not necessarily make us a disciple of Jesus. I want to walk a thin line here, but such is the line between a high view of Scripture and legalism. Our goal, as churches, cannot be to mold people into the tradition of our church. No, our goal must be to

mold people into the character of Jesus Christ. Our goal is for them to become more like Him, not necessarily more like us.

Understand, God has predestined [us] **“to be conformed to the image of his Son”** (Rom. 8:29). This is ultimately going to happen. However, our lives are to be spent learning about Him. We should be more like Jesus today than we were the day we were saved. Just as the Apostle John was transformed from a “son of thunder” (Mark 3:17) into the apostle of love who wrote the book of I John, so our time with Jesus should change us. Daily we are to be learning about Him, studying about Him, becoming more like Him. This is a lifelong journey, not a one-time decision. It is the difference between running a 40-yard dash and running a marathon. A disciple should be training to be like Jesus long term.

Jesus said, “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40). He is the Teacher. We are the learners. But, as we learn about Him, we should be more and more like Him. This will be evidenced in our continuance in Christ’s demands for our life. After some had professed faith in Him, Jesus responded by saying, **“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed”** (John 8:31). So, the lack of abiding in His teaching, the lack of learning what He has commanded us to do, is at least a cause for concern. If you are not being conformed to Jesus, you were probably never a disciple to begin with.

Have you spent your Christian life just trying to conform to the rules and requirements of your church? Have you spent years struggling to make sure you fit within the boundaries of church

policy? Or, rather are you daily learning more about Jesus, striving to be conformed to His character? That, my friend, is what it means to be a disciple.



## A Grace That Is Not

*(Continued from page 1) ♦*

some ways in which the grace that Christianity teaches, is not grace at all. I want us to think about these three aspects of this so-called grace, that are clearly not taught in Scripture, nor evident in human history: first, the universal application of grace; second, the universal effectiveness of grace; third, the mixture of grace and works.

### UNIVERSAL APPLICATION OF GRACE

So much of the world believes in a grace that comes from God, that is universal in its scope. This is not the grace that the Bible teaches us. Perhaps we can say that many are confusing God’s natural mercy with His grace. I know that sometimes we have difficulty, ourselves, in making the distinction between the natural mercy of God and the grace of God. Look at it this way: If any man who is not saved has the breath of life in him, than it can only be because of the mercy of God, and because that God is merciful unto him. But, we can see from Scripture that though God is merciful and kind to many, naturally speaking, in that men live and move and have health and prosperity; still we see from Scripture that God does not deal in a saving way with men after the same manner. All who are living have some benefit from God. But not so with the salvation that comes from God. Some are saved, but not all. This is evident by

♦ *(Continued on page 15)*

## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

*Submit your questions on any Bible topic.*

1. What is meant by **“are as the angels of God in heaven”** in Matthew 22:30?

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In the context which this verse is found the Lord Jesus Christ is rebuking the Sadducees because of their misinterpretation of Scripture and denial of the power of God in the resurrection. Verses 29-30 states: **“Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.”** In one statement Jesus is clearly declaring that the Scriptures teach the truth of a literal resurrection as well as the existence of angels. These were both scriptural truths that the Sadducees flatly denied. How thankful I am for the example our Lord set before us. Jesus Christ was bold in His denunciation of the Sadducees and their errors. Paul would later urge Titus to follow the example of the Lord: **“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for**

**filthy lucre’s sake”** (Titus 1:9-11).

Angels are created, heavenly beings who never marry or are given in marriage. Angels have never entered into the earthly covenant of marriage which is only between a man and a woman according to what Jesus stated in Matthew 19:4-6: **“Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”** The covenant of marriage is an earthly institution designed as a blessing to a man and a woman, who may have intimate relations, bear children, raise them in the fear and admonition of the Lord, and rejoice in the sacred bonds of family life. Angels have no part in this earthly relationship.

In His answer to the Sadducees, Jesus makes it clear that the resurrected saints of God will be like the angels in Heaven in the sense that there will be no marital relationships between men and women. There will be no marital unions in Heaven among the glorified saints. We will all be part of one family, all chosen by the Father, born of the Spirit, and redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no doubt that we will know and recognize other believers in Heaven, but our focus will be on the glory of Christ

and the worship of God. Like angels, the resurrected, glorified saints will be spiritual, deathless, eternal, and possess a glorified body especially designed for them (I Cor. 15:39-49).

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**“I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality”** (I Tim. 5:21). The **“elect angels”** referenced here by the Apostle Paul are the Heavenly beings that are the recipients of His great eternal love, and they are thereby focused in their service and love for God. They are never distracted from that singular love with any **“competing”** loves or services. They are simply put: focused on their **“One and Only”** Love- Jesus Christ, their God Almighty! Selah! Think about it!

So when Christ answers the Sadducees in our text, and says that after the Resurrection, we will be **“as the angels of God in heaven,”** He is speaking of what they are ignorant of; the power of God and His consequent relationship with those elected into prominence alongside Him. **“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages**

**to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus”** (Eph. 2:4-7). Just like the elect angels, so will be the elect saints!

In Heaven, we will not choose some person to be our **“one and only”** in marriage, because Jesus Christ is already our **“One and Only,”** just like the elect angels, so will be the elect saints. Marriage here on Earth is but the type (or preparation) for the real (anti-type fulfillment) of love and service to come in glory. Christ, Himself, explains the thoroughness of that marriage relationship in the second thing the Sadducees were ignorant of: the Holy Scriptures! **“And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”** (Matt. 19:4-6). The overriding principle of marriage is a supernatural miracle of  $1+1=2$ , or as Christ words it in this passage: **“leave”** and **“cleave.”** **“Leave”** your current family and **“cleave”** to your new love.

The marriage relationship causes us to leave our parents behind to cleave to the new love, but that does not mean the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment is not still in force. **“And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death”** (Mark 7:9-10). The love

◊ (Continued on page 14)



# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What is a catechism or Baptist catechism? And should our church have one?

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Here is the definition of the word catechism: 1. Ecclesiastical. 2. An elementary book containing a summary of the principles of the Christian religion, especially as maintained by a particular church, in the form of questions and answers. 3. The contents of such a book. 4. A similar book of instruction in other subjects. 5. A series of formal questions put, as to political candidates, to bring out their views. 6. Catechetical instruction.

A catechism (/ˈkætiˌkɪzəm/; from Greek: κατηχέω, “to teach orally”) is a summary or exposition of doctrine and serves as a learning introduction to the sacraments traditionally used in catechesis, or Christian religious teaching of children and adult converts. [1] Catechisms are doctrinal manuals – often in the form of questions followed by answers to be memorized – a format that has been used in non-religious or secular contexts as well. The term catechumen refers to the designated recipient of the catechetical work or instruction.

In the Catholic Church, catechumens are those who are preparing to receive the Sacrament of Baptism. Traditionally, they would be placed separately during

Holy Mass from those who were baptized, and would be dismissed from the liturgical assembly before the Profession of Faith (creed) and General Intercessions (prayers of the faithful).

The (Catholic) catechism that is described above is an abomination and affront to Almighty God!

Now that I have presented all that I will say that I was raised a Lutheran for eleven years and went through catechism classes as a youth before the Lord saved this wretched old sinner by sovereign grace alone. I can tell you that the only perfect Baptist catechism that I know of that exists is The Holy Bible!

And, yes, every Baptist should have one. In fact it is imperative that you do, if you want to learn anything at all. **“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). God Bless!

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Catechisms are a series/list of doctrinal questions with the answers (and Scriptures) provided, that are meant to be memorized, thereby committing to memory what the Apostle Peter exhorted in I Peter 3:15, **“But sanctify the Lord God in your**

**hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”** Selah! Think about it!

Generally, catechisms are geared toward children and young folk, as part of their education. In home-schooling and even some church or Christian schools such catechisms are still in use today. In family homes, where the children go to secular public schools, Baptist catechisms endorsed by their local New Testament Baptist church would be an excellent medium for family Bible studies and can be used to ground young students, regardless of biological age, in the faith of our Lord.

Obviously, there are many heretical catechisms being proliferated in our modern society, so great care should be taken to find sound, scriptural Baptist catechisms to educate our children with. John Bunyan in 1675 wrote an early English catechism (before he wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*) to be used by his congregation for studying the Scriptures and important Baptist doctrines while he was in jail, and unable to minister to them in his usual pastoral capacity. Charles Spurgeon also edited the current Baptist Catechism (authored by Benjamin Keach) for his congregation and used it to benefit his membership. The church I pastor, in the 1980's updated their Confession of Faith to ensure their membership's foundation on key doctrines.

James P. Boyce introduced his Baptist version of this simple, yet effective teaching method in *A Brief Catechism of Bible Doctrine* (1867): “The author of this brief Doctrinal Catechism knows of no work of the kind in circulation among Baptists. Keach's Catechism, generally

called the “Baptist Catechism,” is scarcely used at all. No reason can be assigned for this, except that it is too difficult for children. In the present work, an attempt has been made to simplify, as far as possible, without sacrificing important truth. The teacher may have to give some further aid, by explaining a few words here and there. The aim has been to bring the truth taught within the comprehension of children of ten to twelve years old and upwards. The desire has been felt to promote catechetical instruction in the family and the Sunday school. It is believed that there are many who appreciate its value as a means of teaching the truth of God. To the attention of such, this little work is commended, with the hope that it may meet their wants. At the same time, pastors of churches, superintendents and teachers of Sunday schools, and pious parents, are urged to consider how far a partial recourse at least to catechetical instruction may tend to restore the vigorous piety of bygone days.”

I am particularly taken with the last phrase in Boyce's exhortation to religious leaders. If pastors, teachers and “pious parents” would consider the course of urging scriptural and doctrinal memorization to the newest generations, we might restore the “vigorous piety of bygone days!” Certainly the lack of Biblical teaching is the most dangerous failure of America today. As we have drifted away from the Rock of Security found in the morals and statutes of the Holy Bible, society has lost their foundation: **“In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from**

◇ (Continued on page 14)

# Forum #1

(Continued from page 12) ♦

for previous relationships is not to change in respect of our love, honor and recognition of them, but in relationship to the new love. It has priorities! So much so, that the language seems harsh that Christ uses in Luke 14:26, **"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."** I know the Greek word here can have the thought of "love less," but the level of that love should never rival our love of Christ now, and it certainly will not, when we are as the elect angels are in Heaven's bright land. As the elect angels are, so will be the elect saints! Selah! Think about it!

In this life, marriage is the instrument of immortality for humanity. Procreation/perpetuity is found (practically) in the type, that is marriage. The silly Sadducees did not realize that marriage was only the type, waiting for the anti-type revealed by the power of the God of the resurrection. They failed to understand that the family name is only really perpetual in Christ the Lord. **"But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living"** (Matt. 22:31-32). Christ Jesus promises that those wed to Him shall never die, as revealed to Martha at Lazarus' gravesite. **"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall**

**never die..."** (John 11:25-26). Oh, sinner, leave mortality behind and cleave to immortality in Christ! As the elect angels are, so will be the elect saints! Selah! Think about it!

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In the previous verses of Matthew 22:30 the Pharisees were trying to entangle Jesus in His talk (verse 15). They basically were just throwing a bunch of silly questions at Him to try and trip Him up, which was futile. And in (verse 29) He told the Sadducees (who were trying to trip him up as well) that they were in error, that they did not know the Scriptures, nor did they know the power of God (which is still true today in many cases). The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection (v. 23). So this, too, was a silly question. I do not believe there is ever a dumb or stupid question, but there can be just plain, flat-out silly questions when someone wants to try and trip you up.

The Sadducees did not believe in angels, so Jesus was exposing another of their false beliefs (doctrines), **"Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees"** (Matt. 16:6). Angels are deathless creatures who do not propagate (reproduce) and therefore have no need of marriage. **"In the resurrection"** the saints will have those same characteristics.

So this woman, (who according to the Sadducees) was married to all these brothers will not have

any of them for a husband **"In the resurrection"** because she will be **"as the angels of God in heaven"** in respect to marriage and/or propagation!

Paul said in I Corinthians 6:3 we will judge angels, **"Know ye not that we shall judge angels?"** That sounds more exciting to me than if we would be married to a certain individual. I do not know about you, dear reader, but I am hoping to be in the marriage of the Lamb! Just think how exciting that should have been to the Pharisees and the Sadducees, if they only would have believed in the Lamb of God. God Bless!

ROGER REED



## Forum #2

(Continued from page 13) ♦

**the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment"** (Isa. 59:13-15). Truth has been termed irrelevant and as situational ethics, instead of adamantly encased catechistically by the holy standard of God. Selah! Think about it!

God requires the understanding of His Holy Word to be a vital part of our children's education. **"Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, ...Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. ...Behold, I**

**have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, ... Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding ...Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people...that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, ...but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons"** (Deu. 4:1-9). Selah!

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A catechism by definition is: an elementary book containing a summary of the principles of a Christian religion, in the form of questions and answers. Simply stated it is chiefly a book designed to teach the truths of Scripture to children by way of questions and answers. Many parents use catechisms to teach and review the general tenets of the Christian faith.

Catholics and Protestants have long used catechisms to instruct their children and young people. For this reason, Baptists have no doubt been somewhat wary of this method of teaching. It is right to be wary of false doctrine drilled into the minds of children, but there is absolutely nothing wrong with the method of teaching truth by way of question and answer. I personally have never used a formal catechism with my children or grandchildren, but would have no problem with those

♦ (Continued on page 15)

## Forum #2

(Continued from page 14) ♦

who decide to use this method of teaching. We often recite memory verses, answer questions about Bible characters, and focus on Bible stories, the life of Christ, etc. A few weeks ago my wife and I had our grandchildren for the day. I marveled as I listened to my wife asking the grandchildren questions about the Scriptures, salvation, Bible characters, and then applying the lessons to their life. We read and quoted Scriptures together. We often do this around the dinner table or while driving somewhere in the car. My son reads the Scriptures and prays with His children each night before bed. My daughter and son in law do the same with their children. I think it is very much like what God instructed the Israelites to do in Deuteronomy 6:4-7: **"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."** In a very real way devotional time and family worship is very similar to the method of using a catechism.

I am not really familiar with formal Baptist catechisms. I googled Baptist catechisms and found that there have been several used through the centuries. The Baptist Catechism by Benjamin Keach was first used in 1693 in England. Later, C. H. Spurgeon also developed a Baptist

catechism. In early America the Philadelphia Baptist Association printed Keach's Catechism. Later J. P. Boyce, the founder and President of the Southern Baptist Seminary authored a catechism in 1863. In 1891 John Broadus also developed a catechism to be used among Southern Baptists. I am sure there are others, but I mention these only to prove that Baptists have in the past and continue in the present to use this worthy method of teaching.

TOM ROSS



## A Grace That Is Not

(Continued from page 11) ♦

simply noticing our surroundings, and examining human history. Therefore, at least as far as the grace of God in salvation goes, we cannot, and we must not, contend that the grace of God is universally available, or that it is demonstrated on a universal and indiscriminate level.

Let us read some verses that relate to us the natural grace and goodness of God that men, everywhere, benefit from to some degree. Paul the Apostle told the Athenians about God, **"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device"**

(Acts 17:26-29). It is in (or by) God's mercy and protection that all men **"live"** and **"move"** and **"have our being."** I think that it is extremely interesting that the Apostle Paul even quotes some poet of the Athenians. The quotation and poet that he refers to, proves that even the Athenians believed that they were the **"offspring"** of a god, or gods. And, in truth, we are all of us the **"offspring"** of God. Paul confirms this when he says, **"Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God..."** As His **"offspring"** we do, indeed, owe our existence to Him and to His mercy and goodness.

And we read in the Psalms of David, **"They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light"** (Ps. 36:8-9). The goodness of the Lord is felt by all who have life. None of mankind would have life at all if it did not originate with God – in **"the fountain of life."** Elihu told Job, **"The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life"** (Job. 33:4). Again, in the next chapter, Elihu told Job concerning God, **"If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust"** (Job 34:14-15). These verses in Job make it clear that the Breath and the Life of every man depends upon the goodness and mercy of our God. And finally we read in Isaiah 42:5, **"Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and**

**spirit to them that walk therein."** Surely, no man who would claim to believe the Bible, could doubt that God is responsible, and God is to be thanked, and God is to be praised, for the life and breath and spirit of any and every man, woman, boy, or girl that has ever lived on this earth.

I have said all of these things to make us think about how that our sovereign God is in control of all things natural, even life itself. This is true whether men acknowledge Him or not. Is not it amazing that so many educated (yet foolish) men and women are aware of the many blessings that they have, but, instead of giving God the praise as they should, they would rather ignore Him and give credit or praise to themselves or some god of their own? I mean, God has poured out unthinkable and unimaginable and miraculous blessings and goodness upon all men and women – and yet they refuse to acknowledge Him as God, and repent of their sins, and believe in His Son. O, how guilty, worthless, and depraved, every man is!

Now, what men do today is they preach and teach that the grace and mercy of God in salvation, is as readily available to all men as what the natural goodness and mercy of God is. In other words, Christianity presents a grace of God that is indistinguishable from His natural bounty and goodness that He bestows on all men. This is not the case. If it were the case, then we would not have verses such as Deuteronomy 7:6-8, **"For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love**

♦ (Continued on page 16)

# A Grace That Is Not

(Continued from page 15) ♦

**upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."**

Now, before I say anything else about this verse, can you not see yourself and your salvation that God has bestowed upon you in this verse? Is it not true, that you and I were not any persons of note or goodness, and yet God chose us and **"redeemed" us "out of the house of bondmen?"** I believe that if God was a choosing and a loving and a discriminating God in the Old Testament, when it comes to salvation; then I believe that He is still the same today. Remember, God does not change. He told the Israelites, **"For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed"** (Mal. 3:6). The Israelites could take great comfort from these words of God, and could therefore trust that the Lord would not cease to love them as the **"sons of Jacob."**

We can learn from these verses, also. We can learn that God does not **"change."** Therefore, if He exhibited a certain grace and love in the Old Testament, we can be sure that He has not changed, nor has He changed His attributes of love and grace and mercy. He still gives life and breath and blessings (naturally speaking) to millions and billions of people. And He still loves a peculiar and separate people. We can see this demonstrated in I Peter 2:9, **"But ye are a chosen generation,**

**a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."** In this verse, Peter takes the Old Testament teachings of Deuteronomy 7:6-8, and he applies them to the New Testament saints. There can be no doubt that our God does not change, and His Grace that was demonstrated in the Old Testament, is certainly consistent with the grace of God in the New Testament.

We can see this also demonstrated in Romans 9:11-13, **"(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."** And then we read in v. 15 of this same chapter, **"For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."** These verses, and the doctrine of the Sovereign Grace of God, do not teach us that certain men and women are more worthy than others. Indeed, Jesus Christ said, **"...They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"** (Matt. 9:12-13). Those that are saved, are those that are saved by the **"mercy"** and grace of God, and not those that seek to be saved by some **"sacrifice"** that they might perform, or some righteousness that they think that they might have.

So, what I have tried to make clear is that the grace of God in salvation is not something that is universally applied. Though some of His benefits are felt universally, it is clear and it is obvious that the grace and mercy that is found in salvation is bestowed upon only certain, undeserving individuals – and is not reserved for all.

## UNIVERSAL EFFECTIVENESS OF GRACE

In this second point, we are covering nearly the same ground as what we covered in the first point. What I want to make clear now, however, is that if the grace of God is universally applied, then, in order to be Scriptural concerning the sovereignty of God, men must go on to believe that the grace of God is universally effective. Why else would He universally distribute grace, if it were not also universally effective?

So, let us ponder for a moment – "What would be the result of the grace of God, if it were universally applied as so many seem to believe today." Men and women in Christianity today must apparently believe in a grace that is universal in scope, and universal in effectiveness. In other words, they believe and teach that the grace of God is everywhere, and of course it is effective, but only if men will partake of it.

My point is simply this: If the grace of God is universally available; and if the grace of God is universally effective; and if God is sovereign; then why are not all men everywhere saved? Perhaps some who believe in the universal effectiveness of the grace of God do also believe that all men everywhere are eventually saved. Perhaps some do believe in the salvation of all men – either in this life, or the life to come. To me, this would actually make more sense than to believe that

God's grace is universally applied and universally effective, but yet all men are not saved. At least in the former premise, God in some measure retains His sovereignty. In the latter premise, God is obviously not sovereign because His desires and intentions have not come to fruition.

I am sure that folks who preach and teach a universally applied, and a universally effective grace of God, turn to such Scriptures as I Timothy 2:4, **"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."** If you lift this verse out of context; and if you ignore many other plain passages of Scripture; I suppose that you could mistakenly understand this verse to be speaking of God's intention or desire to save every member of Adam's race. But, when we compare Scripture with Scripture – such as many of those that we have already read – we gain the understanding that God does not intend to save every human being. His saving grace is present only in the lives of those that are the Elect. Therefore, in I Timothy 2:4, when Paul mentions **"all men,"** he must, necessarily, be referring to **"all men"** that are ordained unto salvation. We read in Acts 13:48, **"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."** God has ordained some, in every place and time, to be saved by the grace of God. This grace is effective only as the Lord provides it.

In reality, this grace of God in salvation that Christianity presents today is not really grace at all. They present a grace that is universally applied, but it is effective only if the consent and cooperation and good intentions

♦ (Continued on page 17)



# A Grace That Is Not

(Continued from page 16) ♦

of man is coupled with it. To me, this is a non-grace, or a merited favor, rather than an unmerited favor.

## GRACE AND WORKS

Finally, if a person believes in either of the two graces that I have mentioned above, then he must necessarily believe also in this concept of grace and works, and some sort of cooperation or unity between the two. How else can he explain the fact that not all men are saved? If God's grace were distributed to every individual, then how come every individual is not saved? If God's grace is universally effective, then how come every individual is not saved? Well, the answer or problem (or solution) must lie with the individual. Any time that a doctrine concerning the sovereignty of God comes down to the individual – at least it comes down to the individual to make it effective – then we know that the doctrine has been compromised, and can no longer be called a doctrine of God, but instead becomes – at least in part – a doctrine of men. If the grace of God depends upon the individual in order for it to be effective, than it is not grace at all.

Listen to what Paul told Timothy: **“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour**

**Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles”** (II Tim. 1:8-11). In this brief passage, Paul makes some very plain observations concerning salvation. In verse 8, Paul tells Timothy that the Gospel and the Power of God are inseparable. Then, in verse 9, Paul is even more plain when he says that God **“..hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,”** Obviously, then, Paul felt that his salvation (and Timothy's) depended upon the **“holy calling”** of God, and did not depend upon **“our works.”** Further, this salvation was strictly **“according”** to God's **“own purpose and grace.”** And, even further, this purpose and grace **“was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”** Then, in verse 10, Paul reminds Timothy that this amazing grace of God became evident **“(made manifest)”** through and **“by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.”** Jesus Christ is the One Who has **“abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”** This gospel, then, must be all about Jesus Christ and the grace of God which is manifest through Him. And, in verse 11, Paul affirms that this is the gospel and grace that he would be forever preaching and teaching.

Men in most of Christianity teach that God is gracious, and it is up to men to decide to partake of that graciousness. This is definitely not the sovereign grace of God that we believe in, and, I think that we

will find that it is not grace at all. We read in Romans 11:5-8, **“Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.”** True grace cannot be mixed with works. Paul tells the Romans that if the remnant exists at all, it is **“according to the election of grace.”** But, if salvation is according to grace, then it cannot be **“of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.”** However, if you (or any man) will insist that salvation is **“of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”** Israel, in large part, trusted in works and self-worth. Therefore, they could not obtain salvation, because salvation is of grace.

Quite simply, Paul lets the Romans (and us) know that if

your salvation depends on works, why do you need grace? If you can save yourself, then do it. However, if you understand that works cannot save you, then trust in the grace of God. Salvation cannot be a compromise between the two. When you trust in the grace of God, do not attempt to incorporate your works into that salvation – or else the grace of God is no more grace.

## CONCLUSION

The grace of God is very evident in the Scriptures. The grace of God is very evident in this creation. The grace of God is very evident in humanity. The grace of God is all around us, even today. And yet, man, in his natural condition, hates to acknowledge the purity and the glory of the grace of God. As human beings, we insist on incorporating our own works, desires, and twisted logic into our understanding of the grace of God. When we do this, we make this grace to be no more grace. God give us grace in Salvation – and then, God give us grace to understand more and more of Him. I pray that God would even give us grace to properly contend for the grace of God in salvation.



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell  
(1941 - 2002)



## What A Gathering

**“So there was gathered much people together. . .”** (II Chron. 32:4).

The gathering of the multitude in my text is a gathering of the people of Judah at the command of King Hezekiah to defend his nation against Sennacherib, the

king of Assyria. What a gathering of the people of Judah this must have been!

In this message I want to look at the many different gatherings  
♦ (Continued on page 18)

# What A Gathering

(Continued from page 17) ♦

of which the Scriptures speak. After examining these gatherings, I trust we shall be able to say, "What a gathering!"

## THE GATHERING AT DEATH

The Scriptures teach that at death the body of a believer is gathered to the congregation of the dead and his spirit to the congregation of the righteous. **"Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was GATHERED to his people"** (Gen. 25:8). Genesis 25:17 discloses that Ishmael died and **"was GATHERED unto his people."** It is written in Genesis 35:29: **"And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was GATHERED unto his people."** In Genesis 49:33 we are told that Jacob gave up the spirit and **"was GATHERED unto his people."** The phrase, **"gathered to his people,"** is constantly distinguished from departing this life and being buried. We know by comparing Scripture with Scripture that it means gathered **"to one's fathers"** (Gen. 15:15; Judg. 2:10).

Death separates the departing saint from the living saints on earth, but it gathers him to those who have gone before into Paradise. Think about what a gathering this is! Gathered to millions of patriarchs, priests, prophets, and preachers of all ages. Gathered to ten thousand of the greatest men and women who ever walked the King's highway of holiness. Gathered to multitudes of angels in shining white. Oh, what a gathering!

## THE GATHERING TO WORSHIP

In the Old Testament the

people of Israel gathered for public worship. They gathered at the command of God: **"GATHER the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law"** (Deut. 31:12; cf. Ps. 50:5). This gathering together into one place to worship and serve Jehovah was a vital part of the Old Testament economy.

Under the New Covenant the people of God are commanded to gather in the New Testament church and warned not to forsake the assembling of themselves together (Heb. 10:25). This is seen in a number of expressions in I Corinthians 11. **"For first of all, when ye come together in the church. . ." (v. 18).** Verse 20 says: **"When ye come together therefore into one place. . ."** Verse 33 reads: **"Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat. . ."** Anything which cannot be gathered together into one place cannot be a church in the New Testament sense. Acts 14:27 declares: **"And when they were come, and had GATHERED the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."** This kills the universal, invisible church theory dead in its tracks!

Jesus Christ said in Matthew 18:20: **"For where two or three are GATHERED together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."** The gathering together of Christians for holy purposes is appointed, directed, and encouraged here by our Lord. Christ Himself promised to attend such religious gatherings which meet by His authority. Just think of it! Christ present in our

services! Oh, what a gathering!"

## THE GATHERING OF THE TARES

In Matthew 13, verses 24 to 30, Christ gives the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. In verses 36 to 43 He gives the interpretation. I want to focus attention on verse 30: **"Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, GATHER ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."** In verse 38 Christ said that **"the tares are the children of the wicked one."**

The meaning of these words is that before the end of this age the wicked of this world will gather themselves together. Any observant person can see this is happening before our eyes. The political world is gathering together. The leaders of the nations on earth are this day at work to establish a one-world government and a new world order. The commercial world is gathering together. Co-operations, amalgamations, unions, and mergers are the order of the day. Even the religious world seeks to unify all Christendom into one big super church which will abolish all denominational lines and nearly all Bible truth. Look at the gathering together of the political, the commercial, and religious worlds. Oh, what a gathering!

## ISRAEL GATHERED BACK UNCONVERTED

There is an important prophecy concerning Israel in Ezekiel chapters 37 to 39. He gives four important events in their proper order. First, the vision of the valley of dry bones is a picture of the resurrection of the nation of Israel: **"Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold,**

**they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD"** (Ezek. 37:11-14). This prophecy was fulfilled on May 14, 1948, when Israel once again became a nation.

Second, after Israel is regathered to her ancient homeland she is to dwell in peace and prosperity (Ezek. 38:8). This scene is not true of Israel today, for she is an armed camp whose security is threatened by her Arab neighbors. The present peace process may finally result in her safety with the PLO problem resolved.

Third, sometime after Israel is restored to her ancient homeland and dwells safely she will be invaded by Gog (Russia) and his allies. Gog shall say: **"I will go up to the land of unwallled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are GATHERED out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land"** (Ezek. 38:11-12). God will destroy Gog

♦ (Continued on page 19)

# What A Gathering

(Continued from page 18) ♦

and his allies on the mountains of Israel (Ezek. 38:14-39:6).

Fourth, after this Israel as a nation is converted (Ezek. 39:7,22). Just think of these important events. Israel gathered back to her ancient homeland by God, and then her enemies gathered against her and destroyed by God, Oh, what a gathering!

## THE SAINTS GATHERED TO CHRIST

When Christ returns in the eastern sky for the bodies of dead saints and to translate the living saints, there will be a great gathering of the saints in the air to meet Christ (I Thess. 4:13-18). To the Thessalonians Paul said: **“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our GATHERING together unto him”** (II Thess. 2:1). The pronoun **“our,”** which occurs twice in the verse, emphasizes the deep personal interest that Paul and his readers had in the One Who is coming to gather them together.

It is the natural and normal attitude for a believer to look and long for the coming of Christ and His gathering together unto Him at the Rapture. The assembling of the saints in the church in His spiritual presence is a foretaste of this future assembling of the saints in His visible presence. Christ will come for us, and we will be gathered to Him, and then we will go to the Father's house (John 14:1-3). How thrilling to go up to meet the Lord Himself and to be for ever with Him! Oh, what a gathering!

## THE NATIONS GATHERED AGAINST ISRAEL

No nation on the face of the earth has ever been persecuted

and opposed by other nations more than the nation of Israel. Even in the day of King David Israel's enemies were determined to exterminate them from off the earth: **“They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation: that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance”** (Ps. 83:4). No other people has been so exiled, denounced, hated, and slaughtered in masses as the Hebrew people. Jerusalem has witnessed more battles than any other city in the world.

Troubles and trials are not over for Israel. Although peace talks between Israel and her neighbors are encouraging, the perils and problems facing Israel are legions. She is yet destined to undergo a time of unparalleled suffering at the hands of Antichrist and his allies. Zechariah foretold: **“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be GATHERED together against it”** (Zech. 12:2-3).

In the coming **“day of the Lord”** (Zech. 14:1) Jehovah has said: **“For I will GATHER all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city”** (Zech. 14:2). The Wicked Gentile nations under Antichrist will seem to have triumphed over Israel, yet they are carrying out God's sovereign purpose. When it seems all hope is gone for

Israel the Lord and all the saints will come and fight in defense of Israel (Zech. 14:2-9). Oh, what a gathering!

## NATIONS GATHERED TO ARMAGEDDON

Before the times of the Gentiles ends God will gather all nations for one final conflict. He is going to deal with them for the mistreatment of Israel: **“For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also GATHER all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land”** (Joel 3:1-2). Note in verse one that these events are to happen only after the Lord **“shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem.”**

Demon spirits will exert their influence to gather the Gentile nations for the last war: **“For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to GATHER them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. . . . And he (God) GATHERED them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon”** (Rev. 16:14,16). This is the same time when Antichrist gathers his armies against the armies of Heaven: **“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, GATHERED together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army”** (Rev. 19:19). Oh, what a gathering!

## NATIONS GATHERED TO JUDGMENT

Christ and the armies of Heaven will defeat Antichrist

and the armies of Hell. Israel will be gathered and judged by Christ Who sits on His glorious throne in Jerusalem (Matt. 25:31). Ezekiel tells us: **“And I will bring you out from the people, and will GATHER you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. . . . And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel. . .”** (Ezek. 20:34-35,38).

The Gentile nations are also gathered to judgment: **“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be GATHERED all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats”** (Matt. 25:31-32). The words are not a parable but a prophecy. This is not the judgment in Revelation 20:11-15 which comes after the millennium concludes and is out in space. This is a judgment on earth of the living Gentile nations at the beginning of Christ's millennial kingdom. Christ judges upon His glorious throne in Jerusalem, fulfilling Old Testament (II Sam. 7:16; Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:5; Micah 4:7-8) and New Testament prophecy (Luke 1:32-33).

This judgment is of the people of all nations alive on earth when Christ returns to reign. Nothing is said about the dead being raised.

**“All nations”** does not mean a

♦ (Continued on page 20)

# What A Gathering

(Continued from page 19) ♦

judgment of nations as separate entities. This is an individual judgment of people in all nations. The criterion of judgment is each individual's personal relationship to Christ. They will be separated as individuals on the right hand of acceptance or the left hand of rejection. They are judged according to their works. Their works are presented here, not as the ground of salvation, but as the evidence of it (Jas. 2:26). Thousands upon thousands will be gathered to stand before Christ's glorious throne in Jerusalem to be judged for their works. Oh, what a gathering!

## ISRAEL'S FINAL GATHERING

We have already seen from Ezekiel 37 a gathering of Israel back to her land unconverted. After this gathering some of the Israelites will be driven out of their land by the persecution of Antichrist (Rev. 12:6). There will be a final and permanent gathering of Israel to her ancient homeland at the second coming of Christ to earth. Moses wrote of this time: **"That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and GATHER thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy god GATHER thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers"** (Deut. 30:3-5). This event occurs at the return of Jehovah (Deut. 30:3), and it

will result in Israel becoming a converted people (Deut. 30:6-10).

This is not a gathering of a few Jews to Palestine, but a gathering of all Israelites. There are no ten lost tribes to God. This is a complete gathering of the whole house of Israel: **"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel. . Then shall they know that I am the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have GATHERED them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there"** (Ezek. 39:25,28). There has never been to date such a gathering of the whole house of Israel.

This final gathering of the whole house of Israel is to take place when Christ comes back to Jerusalem and the jubilee trumpet sounds: **"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall GATHER together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other"** (Matt. 24:29-31). Isaiah speaks of this same time: **"...and ye shall be GATHERED one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of**

**Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem"** (Isa. 27:12-13).

The Lord promised Abraham: **"For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever"** (Gen. 13:15). The seed of Abraham has never had the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession nor have they ever possessed all the land God promised them (Gen. 15:18). God did not lie to Abraham. When Christ returns the seed of Abraham will possess all the land God gave them and for ever as God promised. Ezekiel 37:25 says: **"And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever."** **"But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation"** (Joel 3:20). **"And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God"** (Amos 9:15). **"Thy people shall also be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified"** (Isa. 60:21). Oh, what a gathering!

## THE GATHERING TO WORSHIP

When Christ comes back to earth and sits on the throne of David in Jerusalem all nations shall come to worship Christ the King of kings. Zechariah describes the second advent of Christ in the first part of chapter 14 of his book and then says: **"And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one**

**LORD, and his name one"** (v. 9). In verse 16 he describes the millennial worship: **"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."**

King Jesus, the greater than Solomon, will build a millennial temple: **"And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is THE BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both"** (Zech. 6:12-13). A detailed description of this temple is found in Ezekiel chapters 40-48. The prophet Isaiah foretold: **"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem"** (Isa. 2:2-3).

Years ago Bro. Isaac Watts pictured this time in the following words:

*Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Does his successive journeys run;  
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,*

♦ (Continued on page 21)



# What A Gathering

(Continued from page 20) ♦

*Till moons shall wax and wane no more.*

*From north to south the princes meet  
To pay their homage at His feet;  
While western empires own their Lord,  
And savage tribes attend His Word.*

*To Him shall endless prayer be made,  
And endless praises crown His head;  
His name like sweet perfume shall rise  
With every morning sacrifice.*

*People and realms of every tongue  
Dwell on His love with sweetest song,  
And infant voices shall proclaim  
Their earthly blessings on His name.*

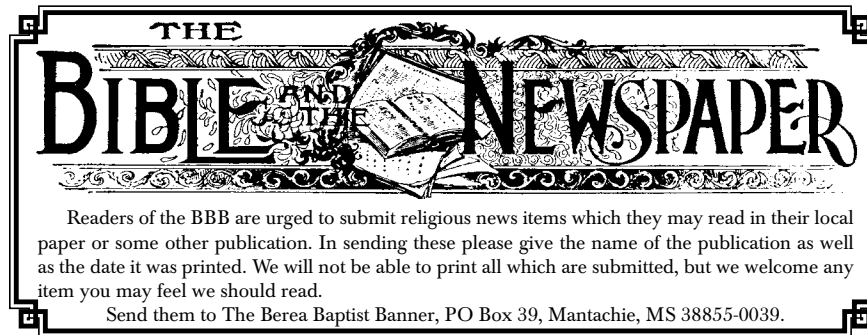
Oh, what a gathering!

## CONCLUSION

According to the prophecy about Christ in Genesis 49:10, all nations are to be gathered to Christ and blessed in Him. Ephesians 1:10 says: **"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."** Oh, what a gathering!

Multitudes are being gathered to Christ by the preaching of the gospel this very day. Christ said: **"He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad"** (Matt. 12:30). Flee from Satan! Leave the filthy rags of your sins! Turn to the Lord! Go take your place beside the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ! Stand with Him and millions of His disciples on earth today! Then you can exclaim: **"Oh, what a gathering!"**

(All emphases on the words GATHER, GATHERED, and GATHERING in Scripture quotes by MRC.)



## FEDERAL JUDGE BLOCKS TEXAS DISMEMBERMENT ABORTION BAN

(WNS)--A federal judge on Nov. 22 blocked a Texas law protecting unborn babies from dismemberment abortions. U.S. District Judge Lee Yeakel placed a permanent injunction on Senate Bill 8, calling the legislation unconstitutional. Texas lawmakers passed the bill earlier this year to ban the procedure typically used in the second trimester. "The act intervenes in the medical process of abortion prior to viability in an unduly burdensome manner," Yeakel said. Texas lawmakers drafted the legislation after the U.S. Supreme Court last year struck down a different law placing stricter restrictions on where abortions can take place in the state. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton vowed to appeal Yeakel's decision. "Through extraordinary evidence and expert witness testimony, we established that Senate Bill 8 is lawful, treats the unborn with dignity and respect, and protects the integrity of the medical profession," he said in a statement. "We will defend Senate Bill 8 all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, if necessary." Before the ruling, Texas was the eighth state to block the procedure. Arkansas, Alabama, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and West Virginia also have dismemberment abortion bans.

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## EDUCATOR WINS FIGHT OVER ON-CAMPUS FAITH DISCUSSIONS

(WNS)--Administrators at a

Maine school district have dropped their bid to force a special education teacher to remain silent about her faith while on campus. In a new "coaching memorandum" sent to Toni Richardson, officials with the Augusta School Department acknowledged employees' First Amendment right to privately discuss their religious beliefs with co-workers. Employees can say things like "God bless you," or "I am praying for you," as long as students aren't around. "I love my job helping special needs students succeed, and I am glad that I do not have to sacrifice my First Amendment rights in order to be here," Richardson said in a statement issued by her attorneys at First Liberty Institute. "I hope my colleagues, and school employees across the country, will remember that the First Amendment still protects our private conversations at work."

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## FREE SPEECH WIN FOR PRO-LIFE STUDENTS IN CALIFORNIA

(WNS)--A pro-life student group at Fresno State University won its fight this month against a professor who told a student she had no free speech rights on a college campus. Students for Life sued professor William Gregory Thatcher after he scrubbed out a pro-life message chalked on the sidewalk and told student leader Bernadette Tasy, "College campuses are not free speech areas." Tasy, who heads Fresno State Students for Life, got permission from school

administrators in May to chalk pro-life messages near the school library. Shortly after she finished her work, a group of students began rubbing out the messages, telling her Thatcher encouraged them to do it. When Thatcher appeared at the scene, he began to lecture Tasy on her free speech rights, telling her she could only talk about her pro-life beliefs in the school's free speech zone. Turns out, Fresno State eliminated the unconstitutional zone two years ago, and Tasy has the right to say what she wants at school.

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## CDC NUMBERS SHOW ABORTION RATES DROP

(WNS)--The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released its 2014 abortion surveillance report last week, showing another drop in abortions nationwide. Abortionists reported performing 652,639 abortions in 2014, down from 664,434 in 2013. Abortion numbers have been dropping for decades, both in total figures and in the ratio to live births. For every 1,000 mothers who carried their babies to term, 186 chose abortion in 2014, a 7 percent decrease from 2013. Most mothers who abort are in their 20s, and more than half of women who have abortions already have children. Women ages 30-34 account for 17 percent of abortions, and girls ages 15-19 follow at 10 percent. Women older than 40 had more abortions than in previous years, but all other age groups saw a decline in the number of abortions. Chemical abortions account for almost one-quarter of the reported procedures, 22.6 percent. The CDC did not report how many women died due to abortion complications in 2014.

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## FIGHTING TAXPAYER-FUNDED ABORTION IN ILLINOIS

♦ (Continued on page 22)



# Bible & the Newspaper

(Continued from page 21) ♦

(WNS)--Opponents of an Illinois law that would allow state funding of abortion on demand for state employees and Medicaid recipients have filed suit. Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner signed the law, known as HB 40, earlier this year, and the Thomas More Society filed suit in November on behalf of 10 pro-life organizations, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, and eight state legislators filing as taxpayers. The suit, a request to “restrain and enjoin” a misuse of tax dollars, points out Illinois cannot afford the abortions it has promised to cover. Pro-life experts told me they were watching the lawsuit closely because the outcome could have national implications.

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## SECOND TRANSGENDER STUDENT SUES ILLINOIS SCHOOL DISTRICT

(WNS)--For the second time in as many years, a school district just north of Chicago is facing demands from a transgender male student for unfettered access to the girls’ locker room. The student, an 18-year-old boy who identifies as a girl, filed a lawsuit Nov. 30 demanding Township High School District No. 211 accommodate his request. The district came under fire in 2015 when another biologically male transgender student, identified only as “Student A,” filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education against Fremd High School. Fearing the loss of about \$6 million in federal funding, the district allowed him to change clothes in the girls’ locker room behind a screened area. That arrangement, exclusive to Student A, expired when he graduated in May. But Nova Maday, the transgender student now at Palatine High School, claims changing clothes behind a screen or in a separate room is

unacceptable and discriminatory. Students cannot be excluded from sex-specific spaces, like locker rooms, because they are transgender, Ed Yohnka, a spokesman for the Illinois American Civil Liberties Union, told me.

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## AFTER SETTLEMENT, ACADEMIA STILL OPPOSES CREATIONIST

(WNS)--Biologist Mark Armitage won a wrongful termination settlement from California State University, Northridge (CSUN), but he still faces an uphill battle as a creationist in secular science. Four years ago, Armitage sued the university for firing him after he discovered soft tissue in a Triceratops horn fossil he found on a dig. Armitage believed the soft tissue gave proof dinosaurs roamed the earth thousands of years ago, not millions, as most evolutionary scientists claim. Soft tissue would not have remained preserved for millions of years, he said. Even though the school denied religious discrimination and said it lacked funds to continue his position, they settled with Armitage in late 2016 for \$399,500, according to Inside Higher Ed. The university said the settlement was not an admission of guilt. Although he won the settlement, Armitage reports the discrimination has not stopped. Since the university fired him, he has discovered additional soft tissue in fossils on two different digs, but he cannot find a journal willing to publish his papers. “I am clearly being blackballed,” he said.

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## MOTHER V. MOTHER

(WNS)--The Mississippi Supreme Court on Nov. 29 heard the case of a woman suing her former lesbian partner for parental rights. The case involves Christina Strickland and Kimberly Day, who legally married in 2009. Day gave birth to a son conceived by an anonymous sperm

donor in 2010. But the two split in 2013, and a lower court judge last year gave Day full legal custody of the now-6-year-old boy during divorce proceedings, ruling that Strickland was not a legal parent and the anonymous sperm donor had parental rights. “The court finds two women cannot conceive a child together,” wrote Rankin County Chancery Judge John Grant in his ruling. “The court does not find its opinion to be a discriminatory statement, but a biological fact.” Strickland, 44, appealed the decision. Arguing before the Mississippi Supreme Court, Strickland’s attorney said the court must affirm her parental rights because the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling legalizing gay marriage requires same-sex couples be treated equally. Strickland asked to be named on the birth certificate at the hospital after the boy’s birth but was refused. The court has not said when it will rule on the case.

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## INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS REPLACING JESUS WITH XI JINPING

(WNS)--Chinese officials asked Christians in southeast China’s Yugan county to replace their religious icons with portraits of President Xi Jinping—the Communist Party’s latest attempt to “transform believers in religion into believers in the party.” The officials said the Christians voluntarily removed 624 religious images, including pictures of Jesus and of the cross, and reposted 453 portraits of Xi. The process is aimed to convert Christians to the party through poverty alleviation and other schemes to assist the poor, the officials said. More than 11 percent of Yugan county’s residents live below the poverty line, and nearly 10 percent of the population claims Christianity. Liu, a resident of one of the county’s townships, said the villagers did not voluntarily take down the images. “If they do not

agree to do so, they will not be given their quota from the poverty-relief fund,” he said.

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## EU CONSIDERS REDEFINING MARRIAGE FOR ALL MEMBER STATES

(WNS)--The Court of Justice of the European Union held a hearing on Nov. 21 in a case that could result in the EU redefining marriage for all 28 member states. The case, submitted by the Constitutional Court of Romania, involves a same-sex couple, Romanian citizen Adrian Coman and Robert Clabourn Hamilton, an American. The two legally married in Belgium in 2010 but want to live permanently in Romania, which does not recognize same-sex marriage. Immigration authorities have denied Hamilton permanent residency in Romania. The couple argue Romania violated their right to move freely within the EU and should be forced to recognize their marriage. Advocates for traditional marriage disagree. “The union is deeply divided on the issue of marriage,” said Sophia Kubu, director of EU advocacy for ADF International. “If the EU’s highest court decides to contradict constitutional protections of marriage, it would lead to an unprecedented conflict of norms. It would create legal chaos and division, not more harmonization.”

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## GERMAN COURT ORDERS GOVERNMENT TO CREATE THIRD GENDER

(WNS)--While the European Union debates marriage, Germany’s highest court has taken up the gender question, ruling in November that officials must create a third gender option for official records, or do away with gender altogether. The ruling came in a case involving a biologically intersex person. The Federal Constitutional Court

♦ (Continued on page 23)

# Bible & the Newspaper

(Continued from page 22) ♦

found the current law—requiring birth registers to have either “male” or “female,” or be left blank—unconstitutionally discriminates against those born with ambiguous sexuality. The ruling came on the heels of Germany legalizing same-sex marriage in October. Although the ruling, read narrowly, only applies to those born with sex development disorders, transgender rights groups brazenly celebrated the move as a win for “anyone outside the norms of sex and gender in Germany and Europe.”

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## BOYS SOMETIMES ALLOWED

(WNS)--Girlguiding, the UK's version of the Girl Scouts, announced last week that boys who identify as girls will be allowed in girls-only tents, restrooms, and showers. The change was announced as part of the Girlguiding “Supporting Trans Members” policy. The policy also says it is not a requirement, or even best practice, for leaders to tell parents that a transgender member will attend a residential or overnight event with their daughters. These changes follow another controversial decision: In January, the group announced that men who identify as a woman can be Girlguiding leaders without notifying troop parents.

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## EU REBUKES POLAND OVER PRO-LIFE LAWS

(WNS)--The European Union has chastised Poland for its opposition to abortion, warning the predominantly Catholic nation it could be in violation of the union's human rights laws. The resolution, adopted last month, claims “universal access to healthcare, including sexual and reproductive healthcare and the associated rights, is a fundamental human right.” It also urged the Polish government to provide free access to

contraception and make emergency contraception, like the so-called “morning-after pill,” available without a prescription. Polish President Andrzej Duda recently signed a bill banning over-the-counter sales of such drugs. Last month's resolution triggers an investigation that could result in revoking Poland's EU voting rights. The resolution primarily focuses on other political issues in Poland, but according to the pro-life Population Research Institute, the inclusion of comments on abortion marks the first time the EU has ever condemned a member nation over pro-life legislation.



## The Short Pews



Brief  
Articles  
by Curtis  
Pugh

## THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPEL AND THE HOW OF THE GOSPEL

We can confidently tell lost individuals that Christ receives sinners when they come to Him. **“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”** (Rev. 22:17). I am of the private opinion that this verse includes the idea that churches which are not engaged in preaching “come” to Christ and “whosoever will” in the scriptural sense are not Christ's bride. Whatever their case, they are certainly disobedient to the instructions left to them by Christ.

The Bible contains the Gospel. But it contains a lot more as well. What we call “the doctrine of

grace” - sometimes known as “the five points” historically preached by Baptists is indeed true and biblical. Those “five points” are the standpoint from which we preach, and certainly affect everything we say. But those “five points” are not the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Let me illustrate. A man goes to his doctor. The doctor prescribes a medication guaranteed to cure the man's problem. The doctor's explanation as to how the medication works on various organs and bodily functions effecting a cure is one thing. But the man will not be cured by being instructed in how the medicine works. He must be told by the doctor to take the medicine, how often to take it, what not to take with it, etc. and most importantly of all, he must actually take the medicine. So his doctor exhorts him to take the medicine!

So it is with the Lord's churches. Preachers and members need to be actively telling-forth the Gospel: telling sinners about the medicine and urging them to take it. We know from the Bible that none of those not first given life by the Holy Spirit (being born again or regenerated) will have the ability to come to Christ. But they are welcome to come and we must express that welcome to them. We understand that depravity includes inability. And while we must caution sinners not to have confidence in themselves and in their supposed abilities, they must be urged to come to Christ or else they will not be saved.

Jesus said, **“For many are called, but few are chosen”** (Matt. 22:14). You and I have nothing to do with the choosing. That is God's business. The call spoken of in this verse is not the effectual (effective) call. It is the general call that goes out to the “many.” Sounding out

♦ (Continued on page 24)

## BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

### Financial Report

11-1-2017 to 11-30-2017

Beginning Balance .....	\$1,744.21
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL .....	25.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL .....	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX .....	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV .....	200.00
Bruce Allen, Fairmount, GA .....	25.00
Carol Willet, Edgewater, FL .....	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL .....	25.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY .....	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR .....	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....	20.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK .....	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV .....	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC .....	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY .....	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH .....	400.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN .....	50.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR .....	200.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR .....	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS .....	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX .....	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....	25.00
Subscriptions .....	10.00
Anonymous .....	2,210.00
Dividing checks .....	0.00
Sub Total .....	\$4,287.50
TOTAL .....	\$6,031.71

<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Printing .....	490.00
Postage .....	522.16
Supplies .....	289.62
Wages .....	2,300.00
FICA .....	175.96
Dividing checks .....	0.00
Bank Charge .....	13.00
Total Expenditures .....	\$3,790.74
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$2,240.97



## BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

### Financial Report

11-1-2017 to 11-30-2017

Beginning Balance .....	\$2,691.95
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	225.00
.....	225.00
TOTAL .....	2,916.95
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Radio Time .....	1,003.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....	1,003.98
.....	1,912.97
Interest .....	+0.01
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$1,912.98



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs is in search of a pastor.

For a statement of faith you can visit the church website at <http://GraceBibleBaptist.webhop.org> or <http://gracebbc.dyndns.org:81/>.

You may contact any of the following for more information: Keith Laurence (225) 664-3557, Lucien LeSage (225) 803-9710, Charlie Andrews (225) 200-1171, or Joey Newell (225) 772-9158.

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The Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Marion, IL is seeking a pastor. Please contact Gary Ratley at (618) 841-0228 for more information.

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The Windsor Baptist Church in Windsor, IL has been blessed with a pastor.

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

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

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The 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](mailto:shellie45@bigpond.com.au).

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

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## The Short Pews

*(Continued from page 23) ♦*

that universal or general call - that is our business. We do not have to concern ourselves or be bothered that any whom we call by our gospelizing may not be among those chosen by God. Nowhere are we given the idea that we are only to witness and preach the Gospel to the elect. We cannot know whom the elect are until and unless they experience salvation. And this we know by observing their godly sorrow, repentance toward God, faith in Christ and the fruit of the Spirit as their lives are changed. Our job is to be involved in the calling by our witnessing to the lost: gospelizing or evangelizing sinners.

In preaching the Gospel we must confine ourselves to biblical ideas and practices. The idea of inviting men and women to come to Christ is not one and the same as inviting them to "come forward" at the close of a church meeting. Nobody did that in the New Testament and many were truly saved in that era. What often happens because

of such non-biblical "invitations" is that people are deceived into thinking that they are saved because they did something. "Coming forward" is a physical act. Sinners must understand that coming to Christ is a purely spiritual matter. Even when Christ was alive on earth coming to Him physically or geographically did not guarantee salvation. While the Gospel can be preached dealing with a multitude of subjects if it is to be preached scripturally it must be preached from the sovereign grace viewpoint: but it must be preached.

The Gospel or good news is just that: it is in essence the news that Jesus Christ died, was buried and arose as a payment for sins. That "evangel" is what we are to tell to the lost. Remember Paul's words: **"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures"** (I Cor. 15:1-4). And again: **"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, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Acts 20:20-21). The question for us it this: are we testifying to all ethnic groups that they need to repent of their sins and come in faith to Jesus Christ? Are we witnessing to them telling them that salvation is to be had only in the Lord Jesus Christ and His payment for sins?



**Quotes  
from  
Brother  
Ritechus  
N.  
Dignation  
by Joseph Harris**

**PAVLOV PREACHERS**  
"The crying need of the hour is for the man of God to stop following a multitude to do evil and begin to think for himself using discernment based solely on Scripture. Instead, when today's latest Laodicean leader rings the bell announcing a new teaching, philosophy or method, like Pavlov's dog, the average preacher salivates, then gulps down what is placed before him with no thinking response."

**GOOD PREACHIN'**  
Good preachin' to me is an old fashioned tell-it-like-it-is sermon in plain English that demands action. For those young'uns that don't know what I'm talkin' about, let me explainify. I like it when the preacher says that God is love, Heaven is sweet, hell is hot, and sin is black! Soft words with a poem and joke just won't get it.

## ARTICLE INDEX

A Grace That Is Not Grace by Paul Stepp .....	p. 1
Another Gospel by Milburn Cockrell .....	p. 1
The Bible and the Newspaper .....	p. 21
Forum .....	pp. 12-13
Little Hills .....	p. 5
The Noted Pastor .....	p. 11
The Short Pews .....	p. 23
Warnings Against Sexual Immorality by Tom Ross .....	p. 1
What A Gathering by Milburn Cockrell .....	p. 17
Where America Is Going by Matthew Stepp .....	p. 1