

The Berea Baptist Banner

Displaying Biblical truth for twenty-five years in the printed page.

Imitating Christ?

By E. D. Strickland
(1915 - 2003)

We seek to give all honor and glory to the God of grace and to the Gospel of His son Jesus Christ. We have no ambition of our own, we trust, but we want to be ambitious enough to get the gospel or good news out that Jesus saves all who believe in Him, without any merit, deserving, or work on their part. I am well aware of the fact that the religious world advises the lost person to "try," to "be sincere," to "do the best one can," to "work," to earn salvation and an inheritance in glory by his own doing and merit. But the Bible says before one can be saved he must quit working and believe. So the false religious



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A Wake-Up Call to America

By Charles D. Smith of Louisville, Kentucky

The speed, at which America is turning away from our Creator, is frightening. The question is, "Why?" Why is America turning away from God? Christians, of course, are not turning their backs to God, but we as a nation are.

First we need a little refresher course. Back to the basics you might say.

There are two competing forces in our universe, and more directly on this planet earth. These two forces are the forces of good and the forces of evil. Good comes from one source and evil comes from another source. **"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their**

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How Does Grace Save?

By C. D. Cole
(1885 - 1968)

Practically all professing Christians profess to believe that salvation is by grace. You can hardly find a church member of any denomination who will out and out deny that salvation is by the grace of God. The Bible so often declares that salvation is by grace that few men will boldly deny it. But the trouble is that many think and speak of grace in such a way as to frustrate it. The grace they think and speak of is not grace



at all. It is so mixed with human works and merit that it is (as Paul says) **"no more grace."**

There are some things of earth that no human pen or brush can do justice to--- such things as storms, rainbows, cataracts, sunsets, icebergs, snowflakes, dewdrops, etc. Because God made them, no man can properly describe them or paint them. And grace is something in God that no human tongue can do justice to; no man can give an adequate treatment of it. But, by grace, we can keep from frustrating grace in our own thinking and speaking and living. And none except the children of grace will honor grace in thought and word and deed.

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God's Core Values

By Roger Reed of Mansfield, Ohio

A Visitor From The Past

I had a dream the other night,
I didn't understand.
A figure walking through the mist,
with flintlock in his hand.
His clothes were torn and dirty,
as he stood there by my bed.
He took off his three-cornered hat,
and speaking low he said:
We fought a revolution, to secure our liberty.
We wrote the Constitution, as a shield from tyranny,
For future generations, this legacy we gave,
In this, the land of the free and the home of the brave.
The freedom we secured for you, we hoped you'd always keep.
But tyrants labored endlessly, while your parents were asleep.
Your freedom gone, your courage lost, you're no more than a slave,
In this, the land of the free and the home of the brave.
You buy permits to travel, and permits to own a gun,
Permits to start a business, or to build a place for one.
On land that you believe you own, you pay a yearly rent,
Although you have no voice, in choosing how the money's spent.



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The Tithe

By Philip C. Parks of Flint, Texas

The word "tithe," or its derivatives "tithes" and "tithing" is used thirty-five times in God's Word. The word means "the tenth part."

I will readily admit that I am not an authority on the subject of the tithe and must confess a certain amount of ignorance even after much research in preparation for writing this article. Even now some questions have been raised which I have not, as yet, received the answer through Holy Spirit illumination. I must proceed as Daniel did when



he retreated in privacy concerning the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and **"desire (the) mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret"** (Dan. 2:18). But I will write that which is revealed to me.

To tithe is widely taught and endorsed as it should be in New Testament churches. In our modern churches, tithing is understood to mean that we are required to give the first tenth part, the first ten (10) percent, of our monetary income to the church. This is usually done during our worship services when the offering plate is passed.

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On July 4, 2005

By Milburn Cockrell (1941 - 2002)

Editor's Note: This article was originally preached on July 4, 1976. Only a few minor changes have been made to make it appropriate twenty nine years later.

On this day our nation celebrates its 229th birthday. Throughout the United States national dignitaries and church bodies are joining in the annual celebration. There is a Bible basis for a Christian joining their fellow Americans in honoring this historic birthday. It is not a sin to be patriotic. Moses, Nehemiah, Hadad, and the Israelites were all given to patriotism.

It is to be doubted that a more patriotic statement is found anywhere to surpass the one in Psalm 137:5-6. These Hebrews had just witnessed the destruction of their nation by the Babylonians. These Hebrew captives by the rivers of Babylon said: **"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above**

my chief joy."

Love for one's country is not incompatible with love for God and our brethren in Christ. The Bible enjoins patriotism. David told the men of Israel: **"Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people, and for the cities of our God; and let the LORD do that which is good in his sight"** (I Chron. 19:13). Next to love for God and love for our family should be love for our country.

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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.

Planning a move?
Please let us know your
new address. The post
office charges us \$.70
for each returned wrong
address.

God's Core Values

(Continued from page 122) ♦

Your children must attend a school that doesn't educate.

Your Christian values can't be taught, according to the state.

You read about current news, in a regulated press.

You pay a tax you do not owe, to please the IRS.

Your money is no longer made of silver and of gold.

You trade your wealth for paper, so your life can be controlled.

You pay for crimes that make our nation turn from God in shame.

You've taken Satan's number, as you've traded in your name.

You've given government control to those who do you harm,

So they can padlock the churches, and steal the family farm,

And keep the country deep in debt, put men of God in jail,

Harass your fellow countrymen, while corrupt courts prevail.

Your public servants don't uphold the solemn oath they've sworn.

Your daughters visit doctors so their children won't be born.

Your leaders ship artillery and guns to foreign shores,

And send your sons to slaughter, fighting other people's wars.

Can you regain freedom for which we fought and died?

Or don't you have the courage or the faith to stand with pride.

Are there no more values for which you'll fight to save?

Or do wish your children to live in fear and be a slave?

"Sons of the Republic, arise and take a stand!

Defend the Constitution, the Supreme Law of the Land!

Preserve our great republic and each God-given right,

And pray to God to keep the torch of freedom burning bright!"

As I awoke he vanished, in the mist from which he came.

His words were true, and we are not free. We have ourselves to blame.

For even now as tyrants trample each God-given right,

We only watch and tremble, too afraid to stand and fight.

If he stood by your bedside, in a dream while you're asleep,

And wondered what remains of our rights he fought to keep,

What would be your answer, if he called out from the grave?

Is this still the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave?

Credit Given to Author, Unknown 1999?

Something to think about!

Before I continue this article I want you first to know, I love America, and I love our Flag, and for those of you who do not, I would ask you to leave, yes that's right, leave America. We are not keeping you here. If you believe in burning, and urinating on the American Flag, you must hate America. Please, LEAVE!

My son is a Sergeant in the United States Army, and his mother and I are very proud of him and all men and women that are in all branches of the Military. I remember when we went to Fort Sill, Oklahoma to see him graduate from basic training, it was the proudest day of my life. But it was also the scariest, for you see all those men and women who pledged themselves to the President of the United States, whatever he said, were bound by an oath to obey. I asked my son if he realized what he had just done, and shared my concern of what I heard them say. He knew what I meant, and he assured me not to worry, and I knew what he meant, and we walked away understanding each other. I hope you, the reader, also understand.

I never was in the Military but I came very close. I was only 19 years old and just five months earlier had married my high school sweetheart. In April 1971, I received a letter from Uncle Sam requesting my presence at the Fort in

Columbus, Ohio to take my physical for the Military. I went, was scared to death, passed the physical, and cried all the way home, for I was on my way to Vietnam. I was in that Lottery deal and my number was up. But the Lord intervened and the draft was stopped, and I was spared the whole ordeal. But I was proud of those who did go and those who died. I would have gone if they had drafted me; I never ran away from my duty as an American. I wished I could have had the experience in the Military, I just wasn't crazy about going to Vietnam, and I'm sure neither was anyone else. I believe every young man and woman should experience Military life when they get out of high school and before they go to college. I believe it molds character and maturity; it has done wonders for our son.

Let me make this statement: During the Vietnam War it took 10 years to kill 59, 000 Americans, and during those ten years people rioted in the streets and burnt and urinated on the American flag, and called our loyal GIs baby killers. Listen, drunk drivers kill over 50,000 Americans every 24 months and I don't see people burning their cars or urinating on them and calling them baby killers. Drunk drivers have killed more babies than all our wars put together; it is time we draw the line and say, "enough

is enough." Let me say it again, I LOVE AMERICA, and I'm proud to be an American. May God continue to bless the U.S.A. and keep America free!!!

Our text is taken from Deuteronomy 6:1-15.

"Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do *them* in the land whither ye go to possess it: That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do *it*; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good *things*, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; *Then* beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you; (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth."

I have read where a successful advertising agency has inscribed these words on the floor of a rotunda in its headquarters: COMMUNITY, INTEGRITY, RESTLESSNESS, FREEDOM and RESPONSIBILITY, CURIOSITY AND WINNING. As employees pass by, they are reminded of the company's core values.

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God’s Core Values

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It has become common for businesses to display their central beliefs in prominent places. I work in a graphics department and my main job is to make posters and signs to be put up all over the plant. Our Plant Manager is a believer in visual aids to make us aware of our goals and values. One of the major issues is safety. The plant is very strict about our safety practices. One of the signs I have made is “Take Two For Safety,” meaning take two extra minutes to evaluate the job to be done, so it will be done safely. Everywhere in our world we see signs, billboards, and TV commercials. But this is not a new idea.

At a critical time when God’s people moved from the desert wandering into the Promised Land, the Lord charged them to take His core values and demonstrate them in a variety of ways: “You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them...You shall bind them as a sign on your hand... Write them on the door posts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:7-9).

Do you see what it says parents? Teach them to your children. Oh, how much neglect has been done to our children over the past 50 to 60 years. We have left the teaching of our children to the unsaved educators of this world and look at the problems our youth are facing today. I remember when my son was in the first or second grade, he came home from school one day and told me what his teacher had said. I can’t remember exactly what the conversation was about but “his teacher said,” and I remember being in disagreement with what “she said”. But it didn’t matter to my son what “I said,” all he would keep saying was “but Dad, my teacher said”. So God had a reason to tell us to teach His values to our children.

Doyourealizeasaparenthowfarthings have gone? You can’t even discipline your child anymore without someone calling the law on you. To give you an example of this my wife and I went to visit our son and grandsons at Fort Drum, NY. While we were there we all went to the PX to buy a few things. My son turned to me and said, “Dad, whatever you do, do not lay a hand on these boys”. When I asked why, he said “Because it is forbidden to lay a hand on any child on base; they will put me in jail.” Needless to say I wasn’t too happy. I have always been a strong disciplinarian, I take *God’s Core Values* to heart. The Bible says in Proverbs 22:15 “**Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.**” Now, you tell me what that means? I don’t have to read anything into that to understand it; it means what it says. It doesn’t mean to give a child a time out, maybe a knock

out. Now don’t misunderstand me; I believe that a parent should never discipline their child out of anger. Go run around the block if you’re angry; you should never be angry when you’re about to apply the rod of correction to a child’s backside. God says foolishness is in the heart of a child and He said the rod will get it out. Parents, listen to God, and not to Dr. Spock or any other worldly child educator or psychologist. Listen, when I went to spank my children they would always say “wait...wait Dad, lets talk about this.” So I would give them the opportunity to speak their peace and present their side of the story. But most of the time it came down to “What are the Rules?” They knew them, and they knew the punishment for breaking those rules. Let me ask the reader this, if whipping my children was so wrong, please explain why, when I was done they would throw their arms around me, and tell me, “I love you Daddy”! Can you explain that? I can, it is called being obedient to *God’s Core Values*. If only all parents would follow them. I’ll be the first to admit, it doesn’t make them perfect children. But now that they are older, they thank me for caring enough to teach them right from wrong, even though I sometimes feel as though I’ve failed in many ways. Maybe it was because it was my first time being a parent? But trust me, I don’t want a second try.

I would love to go in front of a Judge with this issue. 1) It is my God given right as a parent, 2) it is my Biblical and Christian principle, and 3) it is my freedom as an American. To tell me I can’t discipline my children is discriminating against my religious beliefs.

“**And shall talk of them**” Where? Everywhere, at home, on our jobs, to your children, to your wife, to those you work with, to everyone you meet. “**And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.**” The Jews had a wooden box that had a metal cylinder in it, and in that metal cylinder they would literally enclose written portions of the law called phylacteries, and bound them on their hands and foreheads (Matthew 23:5). “**And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.**” The Jews also took this very literally. Today, the lost world wants to remove God’s Word from the posts, houses, and gates. Our own government no longer wants it on public display. Stop and think for a minute. Our forefathers started this country on godly principles and the faith that God was for and with them. Many were God-fearing men. They wrote His Word on public buildings for all to see. What would they think of our government today, or if we told them we could no longer pray at public gatherings, or say the pledge of allegiance in our schools to the flag that they fought and died so bravely under? What would

they think of us today, sad...so sad that we have fallen so far away from God and *His Core Values*?

How would it revolutionize your life, for example, if you viewed the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) as *God’s Core Values*? Show the character traits of loyalty to God (v.3), faithfulness in marriage (v. 14), and honesty (vv. 15-16). What would happen if they became the principles that guide your thinking and actions? Let me ask you, just what are your duties? “**Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.**” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). In your heart, home, and workplace, put *God’s Core Values* on public display. You might ask why we should. Here is why I believe we should; in Psalm 119:11 the Psalmist writes: “**Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.**” God has commanded us this day to put His words in our hearts (Deuteronomy 6:6). Pretty good reasons, don’t you think? Not only in our hearts but everywhere!

God’s core values are so plain,
We should ever teach and train
Others to obey His law,
Bow and worship Him in awe. -Hess
**CORE VALUES ARE OF NO VALUE
UNLESS THEY REFLECT GOD’S
VALUES.**

In closing I wish to share this prayer that was written by a teen in Bagdad, Arizona. This is quite incredible and stirring to the heart!!!

Now I sit me down in school
Where praying is against the rule
For this great nation under God
Finds mention of Him very odd.
If Scripture now the class recites,
It violates the Bill of Rights.
And any time my head I bow
Becomes a Federal matter now.
Our hair can be purple, orange, or green,
That’s no offense; it’s the freedom scene.
The law is specific, the law is precise.
Prayers spoken aloud are a serious vice.
For praying in a public hall
Might offend someone with no faith at all.
In silence alone we must meditate,
God’s name is prohibited against the state.
We’re aloud to curse and dress like freaks,
And pierce our noses, tongues and cheeks.
They’ve outlawed guns, but FIRST the Bible.
To quote the Good Book makes me liable.
We can elect a pregnant Senior Queen,

And the ‘unwed daddy,’ our Senior King.
It’s “inappropriate” to teach right from wrong,
We’re taught that such “judgments” do not belong.
We can get our condoms and birth controls,
Study witchcraft, vampires and totem poles,
But the Ten Commandments are not allowed,
No word of God must reach this crowd.
It’s scary here I must confess,
When chaos reigns the school’s a mess.
So, Lord, this silent plea I make:
Should I be shot; My soul please take!
Amen

This poem was posted on the Bagdad Public Bulletin Board on 1/28/00. I can only say, God help our children, and God give us the courage to stand and fight for our God given rights and to protect our children from the lawlessness that is in our land today. God Bless America!

Imitating Christ?

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world goes counter to what God says in His Word.

God says it is “**to him that worketh not, but believeth**” (Rom. 4:5).

The false religionist says one must earn a place of favor with God.

God’s Word says it is “**being justified freely** (without cost) **by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.**”

The false prophet would say to give to God the heart, life devotion, etc.

God says “**as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God**” (John 1:12).

The deceiver would say to the lost person, “you must pray and beg God to let you off.”

God’s Word says only a believer can call on the name of the Lord, and the gift of God is eternal life. God bestows the benefits of His Son’s death on the Cross as a free gift to all who believe and receive. He gives to every believer eternal life. In fact, He is more ready to give salvation from Hell than the sinner is ready to receive salvation. But God does not let the sinner off for his sins. Sin has to be paid for by someone. Either the sinner must pay for his sins himself or his God-acceptable substitute must pay the penalty. A sinner believes in Christ, and God counts his debt paid in the death of His Son. You see, God does not let sin

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Tune in to the

Berea Baptist Broadcast

STATION	TIME	DIAL	WATTS
WFTA, Tupelo, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	101.9.....	3,000 FM
WCNA, Myrtle, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	95.9.....	3,000 FM
WCTT, Corbin, KY	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	680.....	5,000 AM
KARI, Blaine, WA	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m.....	550.....	5,000 AM
DXRA, Davao City, Philippines	Sunday 8:15 - 8:45 a.m.....	783 Khz	10,000 AM

Imitating Christ?

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go unpunished. In salvation, God in His reckoning, simply transfers the penalty for sin from the believing sinner to the sinner's substitute, Jesus Christ.

Concerning the life of our Lord there is a serious religious error abroad in the minds of many ministers and lay people as well. The essence of this error is that people think lost sinners can be saved by imitating the good life which Jesus lived.

There are passages in the Bible which lift up the life of Jesus Christ as an example, but this is never done for lost people. Only one saved by grace and regenerated by the power and grace of God is in position to follow Jesus or imitate His life. For example, we read in I Peter 2:21: **"Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."** Is He here speaking to lost people, telling them how to be saved from sin?

The first chapter, first and second verses, of this epistle reveal that the letter is addressed to the sojourning *elect* according to the foreknowledge of God, the sanctified by the Spirit and those with faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. The bulk of instructions in the book is to the suffering saints of God. The immediate context of the verse commanding to follow Jesus' example reveals that the Holy Spirit is advising the suffering children of God to take their suffering patiently. This is the way Christ suffered---with patience. In this sense we are to follow in His steps. There is not the slightest intimation here that the sinner saves himself from Hell by his suffering. Only those who would do violence to the laws of scriptural interpretation would so construe it.

Herein is the bold and brazen error of modernism and liberalism in religion. Modernism looks upon the death of Jesus only as an example of supreme devotion. He gave Himself in supreme allegiance to the will of God. In this way they say He set the great example for us to follow. We are advised to follow Him and His example to save ourselves even as He was saved by what He did. They completely ignore the substitutionary and vicarious elements in His death. They deny that He arose bodily but He lives only in influence and maybe spiritually but they do not dare to know. They stake life after death on a "grand perhaps."

Modernists make much of the expression: "the principles of the Cross." They mean by this, devotion to a cause even unto death if necessary. They recommend that sinners give themselves to God's cause even unto death if necessary and Heaven will be their home. Only Satan could spawn such a lie. It is works and human merit from A to Z; and about the most blasphemous thing a sinner can do is to offer God his depraved

faculties and attainments as human merit for eternal life. It is more ridiculous than trying to exchange on even terms rags for rubies, dirt for diamonds, or filth for fine gold.

Though we may not be conscious of the effect of modernism on religious beliefs and practices today, it nevertheless is having its effect though its name may be hidden.

Modern, cheap, and unscriptural appeals, under the pretense of soul-winning, which urges the sinner to "give his heart to God," set his affections on God, devote his life to God and live the Christian life without emphasizing the absolute necessity of a fixed faith in the facts of the gospel (Christ's death, burial and resurrection for sinners) is the indirect outgrowth of the modernistic philosophy. It is based on the theory that man can save himself by following the good example which Jesus Christ has set.

Man cannot be saved by living like Jesus for the same reason he could not be saved by keeping the law. Not one Jew was ever saved by law-keeping. He was made safe when he saw the blood sacrifice which was typified under the law. We read in Rom. 8:3, **"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned (judged) sin in the flesh."**

You see the law of God could not save. It could only condemn. The law could take life but it could not give life. Man could not be saved by law because of his carnal nature. He in himself did not have power to live up to the perfect will of God expressed in His law.

Now if man with his flesh, his carnal, fallen, evil nature could not be saved by the law before Christ, how can he in his fallen state and corrupt nature imitate the life of Christ and be saved by his own attainment today?

To set forth the good life of Jesus for salvation for sinners today is no less a legal-law principle than a law-for-salvation absurdity before Christ came. Both are a flesh-meriting attempt. Paul says, **"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing"** (Rom. 7:18). How can we with honesty take that which the Scripture says is no good, and try to bribe God to take it in exchange for salvation and life eternal? God is not in the trading business!

God gives life to the believing sinner without the sinner giving for it.

For the believer in Christ, God takes care of his sin-guilt through the death of his Son. Through His Son's resurrection He charges perfect righteousness to the believer's account.

Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law in His death and resurrection. Sin was judged in Him, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who are not

dependent upon a system which relies on works of flesh.

(The Baptist Examiner, June 15, 1957).

How Does Grace

(Continued from page 121) ♦

It was only after Saul of Tarsus had been saved by grace that he said, **"By the grace of God I am what I am."** Paul thus gave grace the credit for his conversion. A great change had taken place in his thoughts and affections and ambitions, and he attributes this change to the grace of God. He once believed in salvation by works and profited in the Jewish religion above many men of his age, but it pleased God to call him by His grace, and reveal His Son Jesus in him (Gal. 1:14). He once knew Christ after the flesh and hated Him---he once had a carnal or fleshly conception of Christ and looked upon Him as an imposter and boasted that he would be separated from Him; but since grace wrought in his heart, he delights to say, **"For to me, to live is Christ."** He was once ambitious for worldly honors and human praise, but since grace wrought his conversion he was ambitious to be well-pleasing to Christ.

WHAT IS GRACE?

Grace has been defined as the unmerited favor of God, but this is weak and inadequate. It has also been defined as the favor of God to the ill-deserving. This is better but still not strong enough. Grace is the salvation of the Hell-deserving. Grace is an attribute in God; it is a principle in His character that causes Him to give sinners the very opposite of what they deserve. The sinner deserves condemnation, for he has sinned; but grace gives justification. We read in Romans 3:24, **"being justified freely (without cause) by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."** The sinner deserves eternal woe; grace gives eternal joy. The sinner deserves damnation; grace brings salvation. The sinner deserves death, even the second death; grace provided a substitute; even the only begotten Son of God. The sinner deserves Hell; grace gives Heaven. God is called the God of all grace. We are saved by His grace and not by our graces. All the graces in men are the gift of the Grace of God.

HOW DOES GRACE SAVE?

Before answering this question we shall lay down some principles by which to reason:

1. Salvation by grace destroys all room for human boasting. No man is sound on grace who boasts of anything HE has ever done. If your idea of salvation leaves any room for boasting you can be sure it is wrong. No man can even boast of his repentance and faith for they are gifts of His grace. All our graces are fruit of the Spirit, originated in the grace of God.

2. Salvation by grace means that God

is to have all the praise for providing the Saviour; The Son is to have all the praise for performing the work of salvation; and the Holy Spirit is to have all the praise for causing us to trust the Saviour and appreciate His salvation.

3. Salvation by grace does not give license to sin. He, who justifies his sinning on the ground that salvation is by grace, does not have the grace of God in him. The child of grace, you may be sure, hates sin, strives against it, and when he falls into sin he forsakes and confesses it. . .

But back to our question: HOW DOES GRACE SAVE? . . .

1. Grace does NOT save by enabling us to perfectly keep the law of God. By nature, and of ourselves, we cannot keep the law. Sin is natural to the natural man. Now if God should put within us supernatural and spiritual power, and eradicate every vestige of our sinful nature, causing us to keep the law, that would be grace indeed. It would be grace because it would be giving us that which we do not deserve. But this is NOT the way that grace saves.

(A) That would not satisfy justice for the sins already committed. God is just as well as gracious and grace never acts contrary to justice. If the sinner could quit sinning after his first sin, and never sin again, justice would condemn him for that one sin.

(B) That would rob Christ of any part of our salvation. If grace saves us by making us sinless in nature and conduct then salvation would be by grace, and apart from Jesus Christ. It is absurd to suppose that grace saves apart from Christ.

(C) If grace saves us by enabling us to keep the law, then the Holy Spirit would be the Saviour rather than Christ. If a spirit of perfect obedience were given us that would be the work of the Holy Spirit.

2. Grace does not save us by overlooking our sins! That would be grace if God took no account of our sins. Our sins deserve punishment but if God overlooked them and did not inflict punishment for them, that certainly would be grace---that would be unmerited favor of God---that would be salvation for the Hell-deserving; but this is not the way that grace saves.

(A) Because it would be at the expense of Justice. God said that the wages of sin is death. He has declared that sin must be punished, and if He overlooked sin and did not punish it; such would be grace, but grace at the expense of Justice.

(B) There would have been no need of Christ's coming to earth and dying for sinners. His death would be in vain---it would not be needed---if grace could save by overlooking sin.

(C) It would cause us to admire one attribute and despise another. If grace saves apart from the satisfaction of Justice the sinner might admire the grace

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Mini-Edition

by Joseph Harris

Chairman of Biblical Studies
Southeastern Baptist
College, Laurel, Mississippi
www.miniedition.com**"But My God Shall Supply all Your Need".....Are You Sure?**

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." The promises of provision from God for His children are numerous and wonderful. God provides our every heartbeat, the food we eat and even luxuries that we could essentially do without. He is a great God and, every time, in every way, always and without fail, supplies our basic needs, ensuring that no child of His goes without the necessities of life. That last sentence is very comforting.....but not always true.

If you believe God always and without hesitation, supplies every basic need at all times for all His children without discrimination, then you have been watching too much TBN, or at least the wrong programs on TBN. As a general truth, God does supply our needs and even some desires. Some like to say that God will always supply our needs, not our greeds. Sounds spiritual.

Need is determined by God, not man. That which we think we need and that which God KNOWS we need, may not match. Does this include even, basic needs, such as food, water, clothing, sleep and health? YES!

Consider Job. There was a time in his life when his greatest need seemed to be good physical health. His body was covered in boils, which brought fever, meaning he was in severe pain. One boil can cause great discomfort. Imagine not being able to sit, turn or lie down without extreme pain with each movement. Yet, God did not immediately heal him. And remember, Job had no idea why all this was happening. At the time, he was not aware of the dialogue between God and Satan found at the beginning of the book. Though Job was LATER healed and blessed, God's divine plan for Job at the time, was to glorify Him through suffering. God's divine call for Job overruled any healing or prosperity for the moment.

Consider Lazarus the beggar in Luke 16. One thousand years earlier, David said he had never seen the righteous forsaken or His (God's) seed begging for bread. Yet notice: Lazarus was God's child, but he was lacking (1) good health, for he was full of sores (vs. 20). (2) He also lacked money, for he was a beggar. And, (3) He was lacking food, for he was eating crumbs from a table. If only poor Lazarus could have just heard Benny Hinn or Kenneth Copeland preach, he would have been well and wealthy.....if he had enough faith. Or

just maybe, God's calling for him was to glorify God through adversity. Abraham did say Lazarus received **"evil things"** in life, verse 25.

Consider the great Apostle Paul. If anyone was in the will of God, and super spiritual, it was the rabbi from Tarsus who was changed on the Damascus road. He was even the one who said God would supply all need. By the way, he wrote this from prison. You would think his greatest need was being released from jail so he could be free to preach the gospel. Strangely enough, Paul gives a list of several needs of his that were not met, all while in service for God.

In II Corinthians 11:27, he mentions being **"In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."** This verse specifically states Paul had need of sleep, good health, food, water, shelter and clothes, yet these basic needs were not met. Why? God's specific calling for Paul was that he endure these needs and glorify God through his suffering. And notice, Paul wasn't complaining, he was glorifying God.

This little nugget of truth, glorifying God through suffering, is ignored and denied because it goes against the flesh. If the modern day prosperity crowd preached this, offerings would bottom out tomorrow. You will not hear this message from these purveyors of prosperity whose sole purpose in life is to latch onto your loot. These "Profits" will continue to beguile the masses (even in Baptist churches, imagine that) while padding their pocketbooks. God help them on the Day of Judgment and may God help us to glorify Him through whatever calling He has given to each of us individually.

How Does Grace

(Continued from page 124) ♦

of God, but he would despise His Justice. We would not think much of a human judge that would overlook the crimes of men and let them all go free. Such a judge would be despised. Such procedure would be an invitation for everybody to commit whatever crimes he pleased, knowing they would be overlooked. . .How would you like to live in such a community?

3. Grace does not save by giving us ordinances to believe! The ordinances or ceremonies of Christ are for those already saved. Nobody but the saved are to be baptized and come to the Lord's table. The most terrible and soul-destroying heresies have come from a false conception of the ordinances.

HOW DOES GRACE SAVE?

1. Grace saves us from the guilt and penalty of our sins by putting our sins upon Christ, and having Him bear them in His own body on the tree. Grace saves by punishing Christ instead of the sinner.

Christ put away our sin by the sacrifice of Himself. This way of salvation conserves the truth in all things.

(A) It conserves the truth of God's Justice. Justice says my sins must be punished, and they have been punished. Grace did not war against Justice. Grace met the demands of Justice by putting my sins on Christ and there Justice found them and punished them. Let me illustrate:

The son of a poor man commits an offense. The court fines him \$50.00. The boy has not a cent with which to pay the fine. The son of the trial judge steps forward and hands the clerk the \$50.00. Justice is satisfied and the poor boy goes free. Grace led the Judge's son to pay the fine. The boy did absolutely nothing to merit it. Yet his fine is paid and Justice is satisfied.

(B) Grace gives all the honour to Christ. When we think of the liquidation of our sin debt, nobody is to have any credit but Christ. We can glory in nothing but His cross. "Grace," cried Spurgeon, "is everything for nothing; Christ free, pardon free, Heaven free."

(C) Grace saves by making Christ and His atoning death precious to our hearts. The death of Christ does not benefit a man who lives and dies without ever hoping in Christ. And every man of us would so live and die were it not for the converting grace of God. By nature Saul of Tarsus was a proud, self-righteous Pharisee and a persecutor of the Church and Christ, but grace wrought in him the graces of repentance and faith. It was grace that made him sick of self and fond of Christ.

Conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit, and His work is as much the work of grace as was the work of Christ on the cross.

*"How helpless guilty nature lies,
Unconscious of its load!*

*The heart, unchanged, can never rise
To happiness and God.*

*Can aught beneath a power divine
The stubborn will subdue?*

*'Tis thine, eternal Spirit, Thine
To form the heart anew.*

(Half of a poem of Anne Steele, 1760).

To sum up, the grace of God the Father is seen in the gift of His Son to us and the gift of us to His Son; the grace of God the Son is seen in His dying to redeem us from the curse of the law; and the grace of God the Holy Spirit is experienced by us in regeneration and sanctification. The grace of God the Father is eternal; the grace of God the Son is external; the grace of God the Holy Spirit is internal.

The Father PURPOSED our salvation!

The Son PURCHASED our salvation!

The Spirit PROMOTED our salvation!

The Father PRESCRIBED the remedy for our guilt!

The Son PROVIDED the remedy for

DON'T MISS AN ISSUE

Look at your mailing label on the front page of this month's paper. If you see above your name "Expires 07/2005" then this is the last issue you will receive. So don't miss an issue! Renew now so you won't miss next month's *Banner*.

our guilt!

The Holy Spirit APPLIED the remedy!

A Wake-Up Call to

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place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12:7-9). I have heard it preached many times, that this great war is still going on right here on earth. And it makes sense too. In John's gospel we read: **"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father,) full of grace and truth"** (John 1:14). Again in verse 17, **"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."** We can see by these two verses that God blessed this earth with grace and truth through our Lord Jesus Christ. Still in the book of John, Jesus speaking to the Pharisees, **"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it"** (John 8:44). So there you have it, God is the father of truth. Satan is the father of the lie. It has been this way since the Garden of Eden, when Satan, that old serpent, lied to Eve and tempted her.

Is America tempting God? Are we trying His patience? What does God's Word say? I suggest you read the book of Exodus, to better understand how God deals with a sinful and rebellious people.

I see some striking similarities between the nation of Israel and America. We all know what the Bible says about Israel and about God's covenant with the Hebrews and the nation of Israel. The word "covenant" appears in the Bible 291 times, first in Genesis 6:18, **"But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and they sons' wives with thee."** Also in Genesis 9:9: **"And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you."**

It appears for the last time in Hebrews 13:20, **"Now the God of peace, that**

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Outlines for Country Preachers
by a Country Preacher
Sermon Outlines by Milburn Cockrell

Religious Equality

I Samuel 30:24

I Samuel 30:24

Read verses 21-25. All the Lord's people do not have the same work to perform. They differ in office, talents, opportunities, exertions, and trials. Some need courage, others patience; some energy, others prudence. Some go down to battle, others tarry with the stuff. Some are called to act offensively, others defensively.

I. THE SIN OF SELFISHNESS (v. 22).

1. These men of Belial were very covetous and greedy of gain.
2. All seek their own, and often more than their own.
3. They would give the 200 men their wives and children, but not their estates.
4. They would be fed to the full while their brethren could starve.
5. David reminds them God has given them the victory and the booty (v. 23).
 - (1) Men are only stewards (not absolute owners) of property, ability, time, and talents.
 - (2) See Matthew 10:8; Acts 10:35; I Tim. 6:18.
6. David enacted a law (v. 25; Ps. 68:12) in line with the law of Moses (Num. 31:27).

II. ALL BELIEVERS ARE EQUALLY GOD'S SERVANTS AND HAVE THEIR PROPER WORK.

1. The equality of Christ's kingdom is that of oneness of spirit, aim, and relationship to Christ.
2. We are to be zealous of Christ's supremacy and eager to see Him triumph over the powers of evil.
3. We are all workers and warriors using our power and position for a common issue.
4. Our position and talents differ (I Cor. 12:4-27).
 - (1) Not all are apostles, prophets, missionaries, or pastors.
 - (2) This recognition of diversity should stimulate and encourage us all.
 - (3) All are to exert themselves according to their capacity and means (I Cor. 3:4-8; II Cor. 8:12).
5. God distributes positions, privileges, and abilities according to His sovereign will (I Cor. 12:11).
6. No person is sufficient of himself for all emergencies and independent of the help of others.

III. GOD EXPECTS MORE FROM SOME THAN OTHERS.

1. In the ceremonial law God required more from the rich than the poor (Lev. 12:2, 6, 8; Luke 2:23-24).
2. Some have a greater responsibility (Luke 12:48) and a more severe judgment (Jas. 3:1).
3. God expects more fruit from the trees He bestows the most time and labor on. Those who don't produce are removed (Isa. 5:1-6).
4. We are to be faithful over what we have (Matt. 25:19-23).
5. A penalty is affixed to the non-use of abilities, both in nature and grace.
 - (1) The man who refuses to use his arm will lose it.
 - (2) Those who do not use their moral faculties in the service of God will lose them (Matt. 25:28-29).
 - (3) All things gain strength by exercise, and lose strength by non-use.

IV. WE MUST KEEP OUR PLACE AND POSITION (Jud. 7:21).

1. We must not try to do what God has assigned others.
2. David wanted to build God a house.
3. Today many are out of place. Women want to be men, children want to be adults, men want to be women, and women want to be preachers.
4. Do what you can according to your ability.

**V. WHERE THERE IS LOYAL SERVICE, WHATEVER ITS LOWLY FORM,
THERE IS TO BE HONORABLE RECOGNITION.**

1. David did not overlook the feeble men in charge of the stuff (Josh. 22:8).
2. The widow's mite and the hosannas of the children will be remembered---people who let Paul down the wall in a basket---those who hid Moses.
3. Even a cup of cold water (Matt. 10:42).
4. What would ministers be without the support of their church? Missionaries? Consider the worth of godly mothers who train their children. Fathers who

order their home well and live godly before the world. People who pray in private.

CONCLUSION.

1. Be respectful of those who have abilities which you do not possess. Let them do what God has assigned them.
2. Let us do our best for Christ (Mark 14:8)---serve our generation---have a testimony that we pleased God.
3. The excellency of the believer is not his station, or the splendor of his calling, but his faithfulness to the duties God has assigned him.



A Wake-Up Call to

(Continued from page 125) ♦

brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.” There is no mention of, or reference to America in God’s Word. Maybe God doesn’t need a written document in order to raise up a people and a nation in His name. I believe the North American continent was reserved for God’s Gentile people, in order for them to establish one nation under God, in order to form a more perfect union. I believe our founding fathers knew that they were being led by the hand of God. They had to have been led by the Holy Spirit of God in order to have written our Constitution, and Bill of Rights, in the manner which they did, and our first laws were God’s laws. Our forefathers built houses of worship, from one end of this country to the other. Our first holiday was a day of Thanksgiving. The first Thanksgiving Day in North America was held in the autumn of 1621, on the proclamation of Gov. William Bradford of the Plymouth Colony, in gratitude for the colonists’ first harvest in the new world. The colonists were grateful for what they had and they knew Who was responsible and Who to thank. The Jews have a similar holiday. Coincidence? I don’t think so.

Disobedience to God's Word is sin. God will punish sin. No sin goes unpunished. That is not too difficult to understand, is it? Obedience brings blessings, sin brings punishment. That is how the system works. I like things simple. From the very beginning of human history, in the Garden of Eden, God has had to deal with sin. When Moses led the Hebrews out of Egypt, right off the get-go, they were whining, complaining, and sinning, and they were punished. Because of sin and unbelief, only two of the original group of thousands of Hebrews that left Egypt with Moses made it to the Promised Land. There was the seventy year Babylonian captivity, Jerusalem destroyed, the Roman occupation, and Jerusalem destroyed again. This is a brief history but I am sure most of you know the Bible better than I, so you already know the history of Israel. Is America any better than Israel? Are we exempt from God's justice, just because this is America? I believe that God has dealt

with America in much the same way as He has dealt with Israel, but different. In the 229 year history of this great country of ours, we have fought many wars, from our own civil war of the 1860s, the Spanish-American war, a war with Mexico, two world wars, the Korean War, the war in Viet Nam, and most recently the attack on New York City. This in turn led to the war in Afghanistan, and then in Iraq. America has suffered great losses in all these wars, mainly in lives lost, but in resources as well. Were these wars God's way of punishing America for her sins and transgressions? After all, we are God's people.

Just look at us now. What happened?
I'll tell you what happened.

Satan happened. Many people simply cannot believe that Satan is real. **“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”** (I Pet. 5:8). Everyone should be aware of the fact that Satan is anti-God. Satan wants to destroy everything that God has established. He doesn’t want to destroy the world though; he wants to rule the world. Satan wants to be worshipped as God is worshipped. Satan has a vast army of followers, demonic and human. The Bible tells us that when Satan was cast out of Heaven he took a third of the angels with him. Now the angels of Heaven are highly intelligent, much more so than we are and physically much stronger than we mere mortals. Now I ask you, how slick is Satan if he can talk one third of the angels out of Heaven? He is the original “Slick Willy.” How difficult can it be for the devil to convert a mere mortal? Apparently not too difficult, for he has a vast following. It has been said that for every good man God raises up, Satan raises up one of his kind. I believe this is true.

Since the Hebrews are God's chosen people, and Israel is the Promised Land, Satan wants to destroy them. That's his first goal. Knowing that God established America in His name, America is Satan's number two goal. Three things must be done to destroy America. One; bring down our way of government, two; undermine our morals, and three; divide our churches.

FIRST THE CHURCHES

Have we been sober? Have we been vigilant? Doesn't look like it, does it? Satan has had no problem in dividing our own

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A Wake-Up Call to

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Baptist churches, and he has had many willing accomplices. Don't get excited, I am not going to name names here. There must be one hundred different brands of Baptists. I have attended some of these churches, and you can take my word for it, they are not all Baptists. Every denomination that you can name has been divided. God's true Baptist churches are small in number and small in size.

MORALS, WHAT MORALS?

Pornography is available 24/7 on regular network television programming. I don't have cable, but I am sure the same is true on cable. The only way to shield our children from this trash is to drop the TV into the nearest dumpster. Gambling is a curse. I believe that almost every state now has some form of legalized gambling, be it lotteries, horse racing, dog racing, bingo, riverboat casinos, even some churches have bingo, and this is all taxed of course.

Idol worship. There is a program on TV called America's Newest Idol. Elvis Presley's home in Memphis has been turned into a shrine, and his fans make a pilgrimage there every year on his birthday to worship. Movie stars, rock stars, athletes, you name it, someone will worship it. Almost everyone is looking for a hero to worship. There is One we should all be worshipping, but He did not present Himself as a hero.

OUR GOVERNMENT IS A MESS

The Republicans and Democrats hate each other, and hate is not too strong a word. In this atmosphere of hate, no real work is accomplished and much time and money (taxpayer's money) is wasted. Too many labels. Right wing, left wing. Conservatives, liberals, moderates, commies, vast right wing conspiracy, etc. Sounds divided does it not? This is the age old tactic of divide and conquer. Our courts are not enforcing our laws. Liberal judges are on a tear. They are turning criminals loose as fast as they can. Liberal judges are overturning individual state's conservative laws almost every day it seems. They are overturning sodomy laws that have been on the books in many states for 200 years. Laws against so called same sex marriages, which are not marriages at all, are being overturned. Many cities and states have passed laws giving sodomites special rights that regular folks don't get, or need.

ABORTION

"Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. 20:13). Our real shame and our great sin is that abortion on demand has become the law of the land. Since 1973, over forty million people have been murdered by abortion. Sadly, with this crime there are two victims, the baby and the mother. I believe there is a third victim also, the community. Please stop and think about

what I am about to say, and try to put all of this into perspective. Many of these babies that were murdered early on would be adults now, and many of these would be very talented people, working in many different fields. The sciences, medicine, researchers, scholars, teachers, soldiers, sailors, patriots, men of God, and we could go on. I firmly believe that these people are going to be missed, and are being missed as we speak. I also believe that right now, today, we, as a nation, are paying a heavy price for this great sin that we have allowed to go on. We must stop killing our children. May I remind you of what the wages of sin are? Satan is cleaver! **"The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun"** (Eccl. 1:9). God has destroyed more than one civilization for sacrificing children. The Aztecs and the Incas are the first to come to mind, and I know that there are others, but the point remains. Satan is infecting our nation just like he infected other nations in the past. Our Creator God sent His prophets to tell the Hebrews to repent of their sins and to turn away from idols, and to turn back to Him. God is not going to send His prophets to warn us. We have already been warned. God has preserved His Word for us and His true church. We have His Bible. We know right from wrong, and this makes us responsible for our sins. What about Satan you say? Satan is only a tempter. Satan by himself cannot make you sin. It is a conscious choice on your part to sin or to resist the temptation. That old thing about "the devil made me do it" won't hold up in ANY court. One of the rules of war is "know your enemy," so stay alert, be vigilant, be sober.

It is only by the grace of Almighty God that America and our system of government is still standing. Is God happy with the path America is taking? I think not. Not when every effort is being made to push God out of our lives. Indeed, out of our churches, out of our laws, out of our government, and out of our country. If we fail to elect Godly men into public office, and positions of leadership, (and I mean right now), America will fall, and soon.

In America right now, apathy reigns supreme. Only fifty per cent of registered voters vote. They don't want their voices heard and they don't care. I call them the apathetics. You know, Joe six pack, couch potatoes, that ilk. The only time they raise their voices is to complain. They make me sick. Voting is not just a right but a duty. We fought two world wars, and too many Patriots (heroes) laid down their lives to insure that future Americans (us) would have all of the rights that our Constitution guarantees. Did our hero's lay down their lives in vain? I'll let you answer that one.

I can only tell you one thing, no sin

goes unpunished. America has much to answer for. We must repent. As a side note, people will repent and turn back to God when they see war. Remember the aftermath of 9/11, everywhere you looked, you saw signs saying "God bless America." What we should have seen is a bunch of signs saying "God forgive America." America's problems are complex, and the solutions will be complex as well. We didn't get into this situation overnight, and we won't get out of it overnight. I urge you, dear reader, to pray. Pray God will grant us repentance, and then pray for forgiveness. Pray to God that He will raise up Godly men to lead this nation. Pray for our president. He is trying to do some things right.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:13-14). Amen.

On July 4th, 2005

(Continued from page 121) ♦

GOD HAS BLESSED AMERICA

It is evident to all that an unseen hand has guided this nation from its inception to its summit. God's providential dealings are written across the pages of American History. No nation on earth has ever demonstrated the sovereignty of God in national affairs any more than this Christian nation. What God promised Abraham has been realized already in the history of this country: **"And I will make of thee a great nation"** (Gen. 12:2).

When you consider the fertility of our soil and the temperate climate with which we have been favored by Heaven, without a doubt, we have been blessed above all other nations. We have greater and more varied natural resources than any other country in the world. Our forests are vast and filled with native wildlife. There is sufficient water for electric power, irrigation, and other uses. We are one of the chief agricultural countries on earth. We produce enough food, industrial crops, and livestock products to supply ourselves and to ship in large quantities to other countries. We have the best means of travel, the best schools, the best communications, and the best social conditions in all the world. Our standard of living and stable economy is coveted by all nations. Our freedom is desired by many nations, yet possessed by none. We must honestly confess that God **"hath not dealt so with any nation"** (Psa. 147:20). The lines have fallen upon us in pleasant places and we have a goodly heritage.

To God be the glory for our greatness, for our blessings have come down from the Father of lights. **"Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name**

give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake" (Psa. 115:1).

OUR CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

Why has America been so blessed of God? Why has an enemy bomb never fallen on our soil? Why have we been called the Land of the Free and the home of the Brave? I believe the answer is found in Psalm 33:12: **"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD: and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance."**

The founding fathers were open in their profession of the Christian religion. Our earliest American history is intertwined with a fervent religious faith. Faith in God and the Bible is interwoven into the warp and woof of our nation's history.

On November 2, 1620, a small ship, the Mayflower, anchored off the coast of North America near what is now Provincetown, Massachusetts. Before anybody went ashore, the Pilgrim leaders persuaded nearly all those present to sign an agreement since known as the Mayflower Compact. It was the first plan of self-government ever put in force in America. It begins with the words: "In the name of God. . ." It makes other references to God and His grace.

When the Pilgrims waded ashore in 1620, according to their first governor, William Bradford, "they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of Heaven who had brought them from the perils and miseries."

In 1630, John Winthrop, governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, wrote: "We shall find that the God of Israel is among us. . . The eyes of all people are upon us." No greater prophetic words about this nation were ever spoken.

Before the Liberty Bell was hung in Independence Hall, in Philadelphia, in the year 1752, there was inscribed on it the words of Leviticus 25:10: **"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."** It is regrettable that the new Bell from Britain, which was seen for the first time in Philadelphia, June 15, 1976, was discovered to be without the Bible text in Leviticus. This omission from the Bell sent by Queen Elizabeth is an insult to our nation.

America's Great Seal (as can be seen on the dollar bill) illustrates the eye of God above the Egyptian pyramid with the words Annuit Coeptis ("He (God) has favored our undertaking"). The early Americans believed God's eye was upon their undertakings. Most Americans still feel the same way.

The Pledge of Allegiance to our flag contains the words: ". . . one nation under God. . ." Every coin and every bill minted in this land of ours carries the words: "In God We Trust." Every session of both the Senate and the house of the United States Congress is opened by prayer to God. Those who take the witness stand

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in our courts still say in many places: “. . .so help me God.”

Adults and children throughout our beloved country still enjoy singing: “Our fathers’ God, To Thee. . . Author of liberty. . . To Thee we sing. . . Long may our land be bright. . . With freedom’s holy light. . . Protect us by Thy might. . . Great God our King!” Our song, “America” was written by Samuel F. Smith (1808-1895), a Baptist minister in Boston, Massachusetts.

God has blessed America over the years because God has been in her thoughts. She has in the main as a nation lived by Bible morality and revered the Divine Being. Our civil and public documents are based upon the Holy Scriptures.

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Two hundred twenty-nine years ago today, our fathers brought to this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to proposition that all men are created free and equal under God. On July 4, 1776, the Thirteen Colonies declared their independence from Great Britain.

Part of the Declaration of Independence reads: “When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them. . .” All fifty-six members of that Congress apparently believed that God entitled them to their separate, but equal status with Great Britain.

The Declaration continued: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. . .” The founding fathers at least formally believed all men were created by God.

Have you ever wondered about what happened to those men who signed the Declaration of Independence? What price did they pay for signing this great document? History gives the answer.

Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships swept from the seas by the British Navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts, and died in rags.

Thomas McKeam was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Congress without pay, and his family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him, and poverty was his reward.

Vandals or soldiers or both, looted the properties of Ellery, Clymer, Hall, Walton, Gwinnett, Heyward, Rutledge, and Middleton.

At the battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson, Jr. noted that the British General Cornwallis had taken over the Nelson home for his headquarters. The owner quietly urged General Washington to open fire, which was done. The home was destroyed, and Nelson died bankrupt.

Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife, and she died within a few months.

John Hart of Hopewell, New Jersey, was a Baptist and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. He represented New Jersey in the First Continental Congress. He lost everything by putting his name on that document. English troops hunted him and he fled for his life. One night he slept in a doghouse. At another time he was forced to leave the bedside of his dying wife. His stock was driven away, his crops consumed by the enemy, and his grist mill was laid waste. For more than a year he lived in forests and caves, returning home to find his wife dead and his children gone. Sometime later he died from exhaustion and a broken heart.

Such were the stories and sacrifices of the American Revolution. These were not wild-eyed, rousing ruffians. They were soft-spoken men of means and education. They had security, but they valued liberty more. Standing tall, straight, and unwavering, they pledged: “For the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of the Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.” The world was not worthy of such men!

OUR BAPTIST HERITAGE

Baptists did not hesitate to stand up for the Revolutionary War. They fought a double battle: One with their political enemies on the other side of the sea, and the other with their religious tyrants on this side. By the grace of God they became the victors over both!

The honor roll of the great Baptist fathers whom God raised up for the contest of perfect political and religious freedom is a splendid chapter in American Baptist History. Some of these were Hezekiah Smith, John Davis, Isaac Buckus, Samuel Stillman, James Manning, John Leland, and many others.

Some Baptist preachers were noble soldiers in the Revolutionary War. There was the famous David Barrow and his musket. There was Colonel Mills, who commanded 1,000 riflemen with great skill at the battle of Long Island, and who was a deacon in the First Baptist Church, Philadelphia. There was Captain M’Clanahan and his military company of Baptists. There was John Gano who was a friend of General Washington and who knew no fear in battle. There was the brave soldier, General Scriven, of Georgia, the grandson of Elder William Scriven.

Several Baptist ministers served as chaplains like David Jones, William Vanhorn, Charles Thompson, and William Rogers, who was Brigade Chaplain in the Continental Army.

Colonel Jacob Haughton told the Baptists meeting at a house in Hopewell, New Jersey, about the murder at Lexington by royal troops. When the services were over, he then asked the crowd who would go with him to fight the red coats in Boston. Every man in the audience answered: “I.” There was not a coward or traitor in the house of that Baptist church.

In a letter to the Baptists of Virginia after the Revolutionary War, General Washington wrote to them: “While I recollect with satisfaction that religious society of which you are members has been throughout America, uniformly and almost unanimously, the firm friends of civil liberty, and the persevering promoters of our glorious revolution. . .”

Americans today owe an immeasurable debt to the founding fathers, but they equally owe a debt of gratitude to the Baptist denomination of Christians. Religion is purely an individual concern in the United States. We have no state church; the church and the state are separate institutions. Everyone can worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. He can render **“unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s”** (Matt. 22:21).

Through the Virginia Baptist under Elder John Leland, there came into being the First Amendment to the Constitution. That article says: “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, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” This is nothing but the age-old Baptist doctrine of soul liberty.

The United States of America is founded upon the principles preserved by Baptists and their predecessors. Thomas Jefferson resided in Virginia within a few miles of a Baptist church. He often attended its services and saw its business transactions. The pastor one day asked Jefferson what he thought of the working of the democratic form of government in the Baptist church. Jefferson replied: “It interests me much, I consider it the only form of true democracy now existing in the world, and have concluded it would be the best form for the government of these American colonies” (See *A History of All Religions of the World*, pp. 492-493).

American Baptists today need to use this great freedom of religion to preach Christ and Him crucified to the nations on earth. We need to visualize, mobilize, and evangelize! Let our Baptist churches be going churches for a coming Lord. May God grant us the spiritual power

to go forth as an army for Christ, doing God’s biddings, till Jesus comes at the rapture for His own.

OUR PITIFUL PLIGHT

America is not the nation in 2005 that she was in 1776! While we are the wealthiest nation on earth, we have forgotten God who gives us power to get wealth (Deut. 8:17-19). We would do well to ask ourselves the question in the Book of Jeremiah: **“Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit”** (Jer. 2:11).

The last few years have witnessed our departure from God and the Bible. We have banned prayer and Bible reading from our schools. We are murdering millions of unborn babies by abortion on demand. We are turning against Israel. Our crime rate is climbing with an alarming rapidity. Our divorce rate is soaring. **“This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth”** (Jer. 7:28).

What is wrong with America? Why is our economy faltering and failing? Why have we gotten behind in the arms race? Why are we losing our place of leadership among the nations of earth? Why are we going from defeat to defeat, while our Communist enemies are going from victory to victory? Why did we lose in Vietnam and Angola? Why are nations, formerly friendly toward us, suddenly becoming our enemies and critics?

America’s leaders are not today the spiritual men that our founding fathers were in 1776. The American people have not changed so much in the last two hundred twenty-nine years as the character of our leaders. We now break our promises to other nations. Some of our leaders are to common honor, traitors and to honesty, outlaws. Our nation’s Capitol is infested with too many legal rats and rascals who commit the most flagrant dishonesties with impunity. The Bible says: **“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people”** (Prov. 14:34).

Centuries ago Isaiah the prophet wrote: **“For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed”** (Isa. 9:16). America suffers from faltering and divided leadership, lack of purpose, and lack of will to act unitedly against onrushing Communism which is the spirit of Antichrist. We have begun a policy of retreat in Southeast Asia and Africa that will lead to the downfall of this nation, if not checked and reversed. The détente policy of Secretary of State has reduced our foreign policy to shambles. Our Central Intelligence Agency is hindered and hampered in its activities by too much congressional intervention.

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Hen Talk

Cyd James
Papua, New Guinea

For the hens.
O.k. you roosters can read it, too.

The Blessedness of Serving

"Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work" (I Tim. 5:9-10).

In this verse, the Apostle Paul clarified which widows should be taken into the care of the church. It was important that she was a woman who had ministered to others and was known for her good works. If a widow had lived a selfish life, then she was not to be considered.

To "minister" is to attend to the needs of others and is a mark of a Godly woman. In early America the virtue of serving others was esteemed. Girls were not only taught to cook, clean, sew, and care for children; but also to help their neighbor, sit with the sick, assist the elderly, and minister to various needs in the community. My how America has changed! Girls are now taught from preschool on to compete with boys and show them who's boss, that physical appearance is everything, and to seek ways to satisfy their inner self through selfish living. Yet the Scriptures say those who live in pleasure and selfishness are dead while they live. **"But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth"** (I Tim. 5:6).

Beth Impson in her book *"Called to Womanhood"* encloses a letter she wrote to her daughter on her wedding day. She says, "Regardless, though, of what others may do, God has clearly called women to a special vocation that emphasizes nurturing service."

"It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35b). Most people apply this to money and material gifts, but it also applies to our time and talents as well. When we give of our goods and use our time and talents to help others, we are blessed with joy and contentment. When we hoard up our goods, time and talents, and live unto ourselves, it brings sorrow and discontentment. The world cannot comprehend the truth that by giving we receive more. Yet this is exactly what the Lord declares and as such will come to pass.

When we start noticing those around us---the elderly, those who have health trials, mothers with small children, or someone going through a particular trial--

--things that we can do to help them will come to mind. The more we desire to be a servant to others, the more we will see to do. My mother and grandmother taught me a principle about helping that I will never forget. They said that it is wrong to ask someone if they could use help. People do not want to be a burden on others and are embarrassed to say yes. Therefore it is our duty to be observant and simply get busy helping when we see there is a need. All of us can probably think of times when we were overwhelmed with work or a trial and someone showed up unexpectedly and helped us. Their coming was a blessing from God and meant more than words could say.

Matthew Henry wrote about Tabitha in his commentary on Acts 9:36, "Many are full of good words, who are empty and barren in good works; but Tabitha was a great doer, no great talker. She is commended not only for the alms which she gave, but for the alms-deeds which she did. Those that have not estates wherewith to give in charity may yet be able to do in charity, working with their hands, or walking with their feet, for the benefit of the poor. They were alms-deeds, not which she purposed and designed and said she would do, but which she did; not which she began to do, but which she did. This is the life and character of a certain disciple, and should be of all the disciples of Christ; for, if we thus bear much fruit, then are we his disciples indeed."

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Radicals and leftists want to eliminate "In God We Trust" from our coins and "Pray For Peace" as a cancellation for stamps. They want to ban prayers in all legislative sessions and religious services in the White House. They want to revoke the tax exemption of churches and patriotic organizations.

The only hope left for the American people is national repentance. God will destroy us if we persist in our spiritual declension, our moral degeneration, and our political degradation. All nations that forget God will be turned into Hell (Psa. 9:17). God punished Israel as a nation when she backslid. We are no better than Israel. By the mouth of Jeremiah God warned Israel: **"Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD: it is a mighty nation,**

it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest why they say. Their quiver is as an open sepulcher, they are all mighty men. And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds: and they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trusteth, with the sword" (Jer. 5:15-18).

In the midst of the bloody Civil War, Abraham Lincoln said: "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven: we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown.

"But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us." Is this not our condition today?

The words of II Chronicles 7:14 are still true today. God's promise to Israel is to America as much as it was to Israel: **"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."** The question is: Is America willing to do this as a people to preserve her freedom and friendship with God, her peace and prosperity?

God forbid that a nation that has gone from Plymouth Rock to the moon ever fall because of the impenitence of its people and pride of its leaders. Let American everywhere revive and recapture the spirit of '76. May our prayers ever be: "God bless our native land. . . Firm may she stand. . . through storm and night. . . When the wild tempests rage. . . Ruler of wind and wave. . . Do Thou our country save. . . By Thy great might!"

Let all Americans pledge themselves again to the American Creed: "I believe in the United States of America as a Government of the people, by the people, for the people: Whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed, a democracy in a republic; a sovereign Nation of many sovereign States; a perfect union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes.

"I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to love it, to support its Constitution; to obey its laws, to respect

its flag, and to defend it against all enemies."

SPIRITUAL LIBERTY

Many enjoy the greatest privilege in the world, living under the American flag. Yet, multitudes of Americans live in spiritual tyranny. Their days on earth are days of slavery and superstition. They are **"sold under sin"** (Rom. 7:14). Daily they are being brought **"into captivity to the law of sin"** (Rom. 7:23) and are being **"taken captive by"** Satan at his will (II Tim. 2:26).

Jesus Christ said: **"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin"** (John 8:34). Paul declared: **"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness."** He then mentions some who are **"servants of sin"** (Rom. 6:16-17).

Unsaved friend, you are in the bond of iniquity and the gall of bitterness. You think you have liberty, when in reality you are the **"servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage"** (II Pet. 2:19).

Before the morning of time the Trinity signed the everlasting blood covenant to emancipate the elect of God who in time would repent and believe the gospel. Not 229 years ago, but nearly two thousand years ago Jesus Christ came into this world to finalize God's Declaration of Independence and to **"deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"** (Heb. 2:15). Today He sends His messengers throughout the world **"to preach deliverance to the captives"** who are bound by self, sin, and Satan. Thank God! Many have received this message and are free from sin!

Those liberated by Christ are urged to **"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage"** (Gal. 5:1). To the Corinthians Paul wrote: **"But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak"** (I Cor. 8:9). All things are lawful to those under the law of liberty, but not all things are expedient (I Cor. 6:12).

Jesus Christ is the Great Liberator. He can make you the Lord's freeman (I Cor. 7:22). He can snap the chains of sin and loose the fetter of darkness. Spiritual freedom is possible! Christ has purchased your freedom from sin, just like the founding fathers of America purchased your civil liberty and freedom. Are you free? Freedom is offered. Then why continue under bondage?

Jesus Christ said: **"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"** (John 8:32). He again said: **"If**

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

Will you explain more fully or expound upon the two evils in Jeremiah 2:13. - Email

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"For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13).

When interpreting Scripture, especially in our day, we need to be careful about the method we use. Scripture should always be interpreted literally unless the grammar or context indicates otherwise. In this passage, as in much of the Old Testament prophets, it is obvious that "fountain of living waters" and the "broken cisterns that can hold no water" are both metaphorical figures of speech.

The "fountain of living waters" refers to our Lord Jesus Christ. Cf. John 4:10; 7:38.

The "broken cisterns, that can hold no water" refer to the false gods and idols that Israel's leaders and general population had taken to worship, in direct violation of the second and third commandments, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." and "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." (Ex. 20:3 - 4)

There were three major errors of Judah that incited their captivity. The specific 70 years was to give the land the rest that the Law of Moses had commanded (every seventh year) but they had neglected. There were also social and moral sins concerning the way the poor were treated, especially by the adulterous Priesthood.

But both of these sprang from the greater sin of false worship. They had forsaken God for the false gods of the people around them, or at best mingled this false worship with their pseudo worship of God. The other two sins, essentially disobedience, were the fruit of the unbelief and disrespect they had of Jehovah, the one true God.

This has application to Christendom today.

Professing Christendom has forsaken the true Lord and Savior for a god of their own making, patterned after human concepts of justice and righteousness. They demand justice according to

humanistic morality, which excuses sin, and they have a god who is unable to save all for whom they claim He died. Praise God, our God is holy and righteous, and our righteousness must conform to His; and our God is able to save all for whom He died!

Even otherwise solid Christians mingle the pagan practices of the world around us in their worship. They celebrate, as Christian holidays, holidays that are nothing more than pagan rituals that had been 'Christianized' by Rome and utilize the secular world's 'sales techniques' and call it evangelism. Even some of the Lord's churches mingle in joint services with those whose man glorifying and man pleasing doctrines are opposed to ours.

Let us take heed and beware, both in our personal lives and in our collective worship lest this condemnation be applied to us.

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Jer. 2:13 says, "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

I suppose many interpretations have been given of this passage. I always prefer to take the Bible literally. I don't believe God is in the tricking business.

The two evils are given here in this verse. First of all, they had forsaken God Who is the "fountain of living waters." Through hundreds of years, God had been nothing but faithful to them and His covenant with them. He had defeated enemies for them. He had given them far more than they needed or deserved. Despite all of this, they refused to serve the Lord. In fact, that is their history. Though they had times of revival, they were few and far between. Generally, the nation of Israel as a whole has been an unfaithful wife to God.

Secondly, they had "hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." This is speaking of gods that they had made for themselves—idols, that is. Though God had been very active in their lives and had provided an endless supply of living waters, they chose to serve the gods of the nations surrounding

them. They fashioned idols out of their own hands. These idols could no more supply living water than a broken vase.

Though these evils look similar, they are different. To forsake God is the first step here. The second step was when they began to actually serve other gods.

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"For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13).

The two evils spoken of here are best described in a single word, idolatry. Idolatry is the root of all sin. It begins with turning away from God and His grace, and is followed by the establishing of an alternate righteousness (which is really unrighteousness). This is clearly laid out in the context of Jeremiah 1:16 which reads, "And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands."

Notice how the first sin is turning away from or forsaking God. This is consistent with the text in question because God said, "they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters." The second sin is the natural result of the first, and it involves establishing a new way other than God's way - worshipping idols instead. This is what the broken cisterns represent. Man's way cannot hold water and cannot succeed. All sin begins with turning away from God and failing to worship Him; then what follows are the evils of the hardened hearts of men causing self-destruction (Rom. 1:18-32). The tragedy of idolatry is its turning away from grace and life. Idolaters, in their darkened minds, do not see God as the source of every good gift but as an obstacle to their own selfish goals (Psa. 2:2-3). They do not submit to God because He is righteous and their deeds are evil.

The true God of Heaven and Earth is source of all life and grace (James 1:17). He calls Himself the "fountain of living waters." Christ also reiterated this in John 7:38, "He that believeth on me,

as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." God's people are known by the fact that they submit to Him as Lord of all. They worship Him because He is worthy, and they are loyal to Him because there is no other god beside Him. He gives them all eternal life as He promised because He is life and they are His.

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Jeremiah 2:13 states: "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

It is important to understand the context in which this verse was written. Israel was guilty of the abomination of idolatry (2:9-12). They had placed the gods of the heathen above the true God of Heaven in their affections and actions. They knew better because they had been taught of God, which made their sin even more grievous and heinous.

They had forsaken the true source of all spiritual refreshment and power. God is the fountain of life, grace, and righteousness for those who trust in Him. Psalm 36:7-10 declares: "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. 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. O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart." Our hearts should daily be bursting with gratitude, adoration, and praise for all that God is to us and all that He provides for us. He is our living fountain from which all springs of goodness continually flow. What a terrible sin to neglect His presence and power! To forsake His ways is to grieve and quench His Spirit, thus hindering our growth and fellowship. Israel was guilty of this sin, and we are guilty as well when we trust in anything or anyone other than the Almighty for our strength.

It was bad enough that they had forsaken the ways and worship of the true God. They compounded their sin by trusting in their own efforts and in false gods. They had forsaken the fresh, clean fountain of living springs in the presence of God and had hewn out cisterns of

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

Deuteronomy 18:1-2 states the Levites have no inheritance with Israel, but the Lord is their inheritance. What is the inheritance of the Lord that is spoken of here? And would this pertain to pastors and missionaries in the New Testament too? – overseas

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Deu. 18:1-2 says, **"The priests the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance. Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them."**

I'll answer the last question first. No, this does not pertain to pastors and missionaries in the New Testament. These laws were given specifically to Israel and were meant for them specifically. The New Testament has not replaced the Old Testament and the New Testament Church has not replaced Israel. Surely, pastors and missionaries will be rewarded for their service at the Judgment Seat of Christ. However, these promises before us are concerning physical land allotments in the nation of Israel—specifically, in the land of Canaan.

As to the first question, The Levites weren't given land on which to raise cattle and crops. Their needs were supplied by the other tribes when they brought offerings to the Tabernacle. They ate of the offerings made by fire. Also, they would receive no land allotments here on Earth. Their Earthly inheritance was their communion with God. No amount of land could compare with sweet fellowship with God.

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"The priests the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance. Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them"

(Deut. 18:1-2).

The main application of this passage has to do with the material provision of the Levites because they were God's ministers. This is very clear from the context (verses 3-8).

According to verse one, the inheritance of the Lord (offerings made by fire) were to be given to the Levites and this is what is meant by the Lord being their inheritance. This passage is not teaching that Levites had a spiritual inheritance that others did not, but it is teaching that God will provide for His ministers through the very things that are given to the Lord. In other words, God is sharing what is given to Him as an offering with His ministers, the Levites.

In Numbers 18:20-21 & 24 we find this same teaching. **"And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation..."** **"...But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance."**

Notice how the Lord being their inheritance has to do with physical provision and not spiritual life. The Lord is their inheritance spiritually too, but that is not the meaning or teaching of these passages.

In a spiritual sense, God is the inheritance of all His people whether we be Levites or not. It doesn't matter if we are Jews or Gentiles because in Christ, we are all one and God is our Lord and inheritance. The Psalmist (from the tribe of Judah) said in Psalm 16:5, **"The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot."**

On the other hand, in a physical sense, special provision is made for God's ministers to live off of the things given to God. Therefore this same concept would apply to pastors and missionaries as well. Since they are called to the vocation of the gospel ministry they should be provided for as God's ministers. **"Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel"** (I Cor. 9:14).

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"The priests the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance. Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them. And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw. The firstfruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him. For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever. And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which the LORD shall choose; Then he shall minister in the name of the LORD his God, as all his brethren the Levites do, which stand there before the LORD. They shall have like portions to eat, beside that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony" (Deut. 18:1-8).

The question only asks about verses 1 & 2, but we have included verses 3-6 because, essentially, those verses answer the question.

Aaron was of the tribe of Levi. His sons, i.e.: his specific family; was called to serve as the 'High Priest' and the rest of the tribe of Levi was called to serve the Tabernacle under the direction of Aaron, and of course, the law as given to Moses.

The part of the Old Testament law that we often refer to as the 'ceremonial law' concerned the worship practices of Israel, each feature being, as Hebrew puts it, a **"shadow of heavenly things."** (Cf. Col 2:17; Heb. 8:5; 10:1)

Also, the Levites were given no inheritance in the distribution of property among the tribes of Israel. They were to take the place of the 'First Born,' that God claimed as His own. This did not mean that the Levites owned no property but that there was no specific area for the Levites as there was for each of the other

tribes. The Levites were scattered among the tribes, living somewhat as Noah prophesied for Japheth, **"and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem"** – Levi shall dwell in the tents of Israel.

As specially called servants of God (Heb. 5:4) and dedicated to the worship, they were provided for out of God's abundance in a more direct manner than we apply that to the 'rank and file.' The Levites had personal property and were evidently free to move about the Kingdom (see v. 6) but when it was their turn to serve the tabernacle they were not at home (cf. Luke 1:23). During this time they lived on the sacrifices that were brought by the people.

And would this pertain to pastors and missionaries in the New Testament too?

The principle taught is the same as that of Gal. 6:6, **"Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."**

As the 'shadow' of the Old Testament becomes applicable to the New Testament we see our Lord Jesus Christ as the great High Priest, the antitype of Aaron, and the Levites that served the Tabernacle as the pastors and missionaries of today – serving the ministry under the direction of our Great High Priest. As the Lord's servants were supported by the gifts of the worshippers *then*, because *their* time and work was involved in the services of the Tabernacle, so likewise the Lord's servants *today* should be supported by the gifts of the worshippers so that *their* time and work may be fully involved in the service of the church, as they are called to do.

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These verses relate to the civil laws governing the nation of Israel. The tribe of Levi was singled out as the tribe of priests who were responsible for conducting the service of the original Tabernacle worship and later the Temple worship. This included the preparation of the sacrifices and all things spiritual and ceremonial relating to the worship of the Israelites. They were to be maintained by the tithes and offerings of the other tribes so they could fulfill their tasks, both spiritual and physical. As a result, they were not included in the distribution of land or the spoils of war.

The Lord is the inheritance of every child of God, who are elsewhere referred to as kings and priests (I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:9-10). This inheritance

◊ (Continued on page 132)

Forum #1

(Continued from page 130) ♦

their own making. Their cisterns did not have a solid foundation, they were cracked and broken. The waters in the broken cisterns were ruined by the filth of the world. Idolatry always results in spiritual defilement. Let these verses be a lesson for the elect in every age. Never forsake the living waters of grace that flow from the presence of God for the things of this world and the follies of sin. To do so is not only to sin, but also to cheat ourselves of the blessings of God. May God rid us of the defilement of idolatry in all of its forms whether it be materialism, covetousness, pleasure, prestige, or love of the world.

TOM ROSS

Forum #2

(Continued from page 131) ♦

is not limited to preachers, pastors, and missionaries but rather extends to all the elect. Our inheritance in Christ consists of justification and sanctification now, and glorification in the future when we shall receive the fulness of all that has been reserved for us in our blessed Lord. Romans 8:17-19 states: **"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."** All the elect are part of the inheritance of the Lord.

Pastors and missionaries are to be supported by the tithes and offerings of the local church (I Corinthians 9:7-17), but even Paul made tents to make ends meet when necessary. There is a similarity between the Old Testament priesthood and the New Testament ministry, but there are also many differences. For example New Testament churches do not have their members bring bulls, goats, and lambs to services for sacrifice and to use some of the remains to sustain the pastor. Rather monetary tithes and offerings are given to support the work of the ministry. Because pastors receive something from the church, does that mean they cannot own a home? I think not. If it's wrong for a pastor or missionary to own a home, then it would also be wrong for a church member to own one because both are considered priests and kings. May God help us to rightly divide the Word of truth.

TOM ROSS

On July 4th, 2005

(Continued from page 129) ♦

the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).



*"God bless our native land. . .
Firm may she stand. . .
through storm and night. . .
When the wild tempests rage. . .
Ruler of wind and wave. . .
Do Thou our country save. . .
By Thy great might!"*

The Tithe

(Continued from page 121) ♦

Many well-meaning pastors have done great disservice to the attitudes of their membership and of unbelievers alike toward the practice of tithing with their unscriptural portrayal and exhortations, some bordering on coercion and false or misinterpreted doctrine. On the other hand, there are some not-so-well-meaning preachers who demand the tithe to use it to bolster their own personal greed and vain glory.

It is hard to find clear, matter-of-fact New Testament Scriptures that command us to tithe. If one selfishly decided not to tithe he could easily come up with reasoning for refraining to do so.

It is argued that tithing was commanded by the Old Testament law which is obsolete and without authority in our New Testament dispensation of grace. Certainly, the command to tithe is sewn throughout the law and it is true the saints in our current church dispensation are free from the law for Christ did just that: **"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil"** (Matt. 5:17).

But, if one read the Old Testament, one could easily draw the conclusion that tithing was practiced before the law was given. It was only later that the practice of tithing was incorporated as a commandment in the "Mosaic" law. The fact that tithing preexisted the law makes any argument which attaches the practice of tithing strictly to the law unfounded.

Even with thorough research, one could find it hard to find any Scripture references in the New Testament after the four gospels, referred to as the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, where tithing is commanded. But this fact does

not relieve us of the responsibility nor the requirement to tithe. Those who tithe faithfully and with cheerfulness reap joy and great rewards.

I. OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND REGARDING TITHING

(1) TITHING WAS PRACTICED BEFORE THE LAW WAS ESTAB- LISHED

In the Old Testament, tithing was recorded for the first time in Genesis 14:20, when Abram (later renamed Abraham by God Himself; Gen. 17:5) gave tithes to Melchizedek from the spoils of war which he took from his enemies. After receiving a blessing from Melchizedek, it is written: **" . . . And he (Abram) gave him (Melchizedek) tithes of all"** (V. 20b).

Genesis chapter twenty-eight records another fascinating story which prompted tithing. Jacob dreamed of the **"ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it"** (v. 12).

During this dream the LORD met with Jacob and promised him the land where he slept that night and that his descendants would be innumerable and blessed (v. 14). Jacob was so moved by this experience that he vowed **" . . . of all that thou (the LORD) shalt give me I will surely give the tenth (the tithe) unto thee"** (Gen. 28:22b).

(2) TITHING COMMANDED BY THE "MOSAIC" LAW

Later, the Israelites were commanded to tithe when God gave the law to Moses and the Israelites. Leviticus 27:30 states: **"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy (separated) unto the LORD."** This passage is just one of many which commanded tithing.

(3) TITHING WAS REESTABLISHED AFTER THE BABYLONIAN CAP- TIVITY

The Israelites lost their ability to worship as directed by the ceremonial law and tithing came to a halt when they were exiled to Babylon as captives of war. When they were allowed to return to their land, tithing was reinstituted by Nehemiah. This was the Israelites' expression of their appreciation to God for delivering them from their captivity and regathering them back into their homeland. Nehemiah records this in two of his passages.

In the first passage, Nehemiah 10:35-38 states: **"And to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD: Also the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God:**

And that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage. And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house."

In the second passage, Nehemiah 12:44 states: **"And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited."**

II. THAT WHICH WAS TITHED (1) MONETARY CURRENCY WAS NOT TITHED

Today, we think of tithing only in the form of money. Money is how we measure our increase.

Even though money is referred to extensively throughout the Bible, it was not tithed. Looking up and researching the word **"money"** in the Bible through the use of a concordance, one can find it 123 times---101 times in the Old Testament and twenty-two times in the New Testament. None of these refer to tithing a tenth of money nor using it as a medium for tithing.

The ancient Israelite economy was not necessarily based on monetary currency. Certainly gold and silver and money made of various metals such as brass were used in trading but much of their economy was based on the barter system. An example would be trading a cow for an equal amount of grain in value.

Giving money for Jewish religious purposes was always given as a freewill offering. This offering was not included in the required tithe. If money was given, it was given in addition to the tithe and was placed in the temple treasury.

Our Lord was a spectator of such an occurrence as described by Mark: **"And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much"** (Mark 12:41).

Using a concordance to research the word **"treasury"** one can discover that gold and silver along with other precious metals, usually in the form of money, were placed in the treasury. Second Chronicles 24:4-14 is another passage relating to giving money to the treasury. Again, this treasury money is not associated with the tithe but was collected **"to repair the house of the LORD"** (v. 4).

Money and the tithe are rarely

♦ (Continued on page 134)



Bits of Wisdom for the Young and Old

Realizing the need for more good writers in our Baptist churches, the editor has established this section of the paper for those who are just beginning to engage in religious writing. I would urge both young or older writers to use this space in the BBB. Such articles must be at least one page (approximately 500 words) and should not exceed three pages. Please submit your articles to the Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855.

Behold I Stand at the Door

By Doug Newell IV
South Shore, Kentucky

Revelation 3:20
"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

We read a very familiar passage of Scripture. Many know this verse, and many quote and use this verse frequently, but this verse is used so frequently to promote a wretched doctrine of works. This verse is erroneously used as an invitation to the lost, but I believe that they, to comfort and ease the minds of the lost, have twisted a verse speaking of the love of Christ toward His church and made it into a doctrine of their own imagination.

Too many people believe in errors and easily accept falsehood due to the perception that all scriptures in the Bible are for all people regardless of whether a child of God or child of the devil. I could say "I am happy to see you here this morning," to one who enters the Lord's house on Sunday morning and there would be nothing strange about that. But the same phrase "I am happy to see you here this morning," would not be the message I would give to an intruder who was trying to break into my house in the early morning! Just as every word you and I speak are not intended for every person walking the earth in all situations, words of peace spoken to those who are loved of God wouldn't apply to the reprobate. So common sense would tell us that not all messages in the Bible are for all people. Then we must now see who this message is from and who is the intended recipient. Revelation 1:10-11 **"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia."** Jesus, I am, Alpha and Omega, it was He who had the message. It was He who had the message, and revealed it to John, to give to someone, but who? Revelation 3:14 **"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,"**



and Rev. 3:22 **"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."** The message that the Lord had given in Revelation 3:20 was given to the church of the Laodiceans. A message that is given to a church, naturally excludes some people. Since a New Testament church is made up of saved, baptized believers, it can be said that a message to a church would in fact exclude the impenitent sinner. By simply reading the whole message, and knowing to whom the message was intended, we see that Revelation 3:20 cannot be an invitation to the lost as so many believe. Otherwise this verse would be calling for those who are saved to be saved.

This verse cannot mean what some say it means. It cannot be an invitation to the lost to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. This would contradict the attributes and nature of Jesus. I once saw an artist's depiction of this verse. A log cabin set back in the woods with a small dirt path leading up to the door. It was dusk, the fire on the inside of the home was putting out a warm glow that could be seen afar off shining out through the windows. There at the door, what I assumed to be Jesus, with his head hung low, and arm out stretched, gently knocking at the door of the old cabin, but alas, no one would answer. HOW OUTRAGEOUS! That is not my Jesus! My Jesus does not beg for one to trust in Him, but He is the Great Shepherd who said in John 6:44 **"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."** The lost world loves to think of Jesus in this manner, in want from us. In December, they will think of Him in the manger or better still, standing outside of "heart's door" seeking our approval. The choosing is not at "heart's door" man choosing Christ, but the choosing was in eternity, God choosing His people!

I mentioned "heart's door" because that is how I have always heard the door in Revelation 3:20 being referred as. The Bible proves in John 10 that Revelation 3:20 doesn't call sinners to open their heart's door to Jesus. In verse one Jesus says, **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep."** Then in verse seven, **"Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All**

that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." I find that in salvation, Jesus is the door, not our hearts. And if one is to be saved they must **"enter in,"** not allow Jesus to enter in. Those who teach another Jesus, knocking at heart's door, are not **"entering in by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way"** and are thieves and robbers! It is by grace that we are saved through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

So then, what does it mean? As with the previous churches in Revelation, there was a word of correction of faults, then a word of comfort or encouragement. The Laodiceans were neither hot nor cold as we find in verses 14-22. They had lots of money, but were spiritually poor. They had lost their zeal for service, just playing church if you will. They had not gone off into idolatry either, lukewarm. Jesus told them in verse 19 to repent of the sinfulness of idleness. He commanded the children of God to be zealous. Then in verse 20 we see a word of encouragement. The emphasis of the verse should not be put on the door, or on the knocking, but what the verse is telling us. If the door is heart's door, when we sup, do we sup at heart's table? No, what we see here is Jesus' love for His people and His church. Because of this love, Jesus meets and fellowships with His churches. Jesus will not leave nor forsake us. When His churches gather together to worship, He is there. Jesus loves His people, and loves fellowship with His people. The Laodiceans met, but by being lukewarm, they lost sight of the fact that we are given the opportunity to come, fellowship with the Son of God, in His house, and worship Him in spirit and in truth, and we are given that opportunity regularly. We should see that Jesus meets and sups with His church, without fail. He is faithful to meet with us and bless us, but are we faithful to be in His house? **"God is faithful by who ye were called unto the fellowship of His son Jesus Christ our Lord."** This love knows no bounds, and with that love there is friendship. There is a special relationship between the Lord and His church. He will choose His bride from among His true church. We are His friends because He said **"ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you"** and the members of the Lord's churches have followed the Lord in baptism and joining His assembly.

Revelation 3:20 doesn't tell us that Jesus needs something from us, but that God is there for us! It's not that we are above Jesus, and that He must seek us,

but God is faithful to us. Are you in need? Are you depressed? Do you feel alone, child of God? Are you shunned by family and hated by those around you for trusting in Christ? **"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."** To apply this message to an invitation perverts the sacrifice, the glory of God, God's relationship with His children and the love Jesus has for His Church. Child of God, do you seek that sweet fellowship with the Lord? **"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."**

AVAILABLE AT LAST!



We are glad to announce that the book on the Second Coming by Milburn Cockrell is now available. The book contains 234 pages and is comprised of twenty four different articles on the **Second Coming of Christ**. It has taken longer than anticipated to get this book to completion. We feel that this is a well needed book. The retail price of this book is \$8.95. Due to the length of time this book has been in preparation we are having a post-publication special through the month of July. On two or more copies the price is \$4.50 each. For postage and handling see our standard shipping chart on page 139 of this issue.

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The Tithe

(Continued from page 132) ♦

associated with each other. But one such association is recorded in Deuteronomy 14:23-26. If the tithe was far too great and unmanageable to transport due to the distance to the destination for which the tithe was to be presented, then the tither could exchange his tithe into money of equal value. He would then **"bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose"** (v. 25).

Upon arriving at the required destination, the tither would exchange his money back into a proper tithe: **"And thou shalt bestow (exchange) that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after (prefers), for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household"** (v. 26).

The modern Christian of superficial Biblical knowledge and understanding equate tithing to money specifically. This was not true of Old Testament tithing. If money was not tithed, what was?

The answer is the crops harvested from their fields and the animals from their herds and flocks.

(2) THE PRODUCE OF THE LAND WAS TITHED

In Leviticus 27:30, we read that the increase of the land was tithed. **"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD."** Other references also support this verse.

(3) A TENTH OF THE HERD AND THE FLOCK WAS TITHED

In Leviticus 27:32, it is recorded that a tenth of the animals were tithed: **"And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD."**

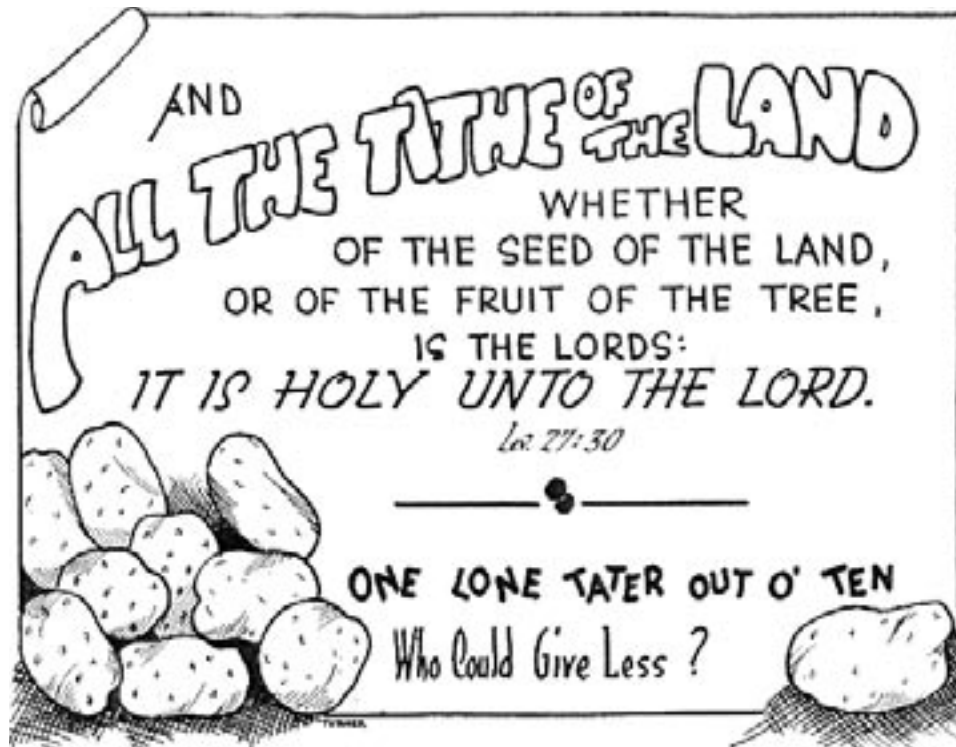
III. WHO RECEIVED THE TITHE

It is important to consider who received the tithe and how the tithe was used during the Old Testament dispensation.

(1) THE LEVITES

Basically the tithe was given to the Levites for their subsistence for their vocation was solely for the Lord's service. Since the Levites did not inherit any land, they did not have the resources to support themselves.

The populace of the Israelites tithed of their bounty by giving it to the Levites: **"But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance"** (Num. 18:24).



(2) THE PRIESTS

The Levites, in turn, gave a tenth of this to the priests: **"Thus ye (Levites) also shall offer an heave offering unto the LORD of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the LORD'S heave offering to Aaron the priest"** (Num. 18:28). The phrase, **"Aaron the priest,"** also includes all of Aaron's descendants as well.

(3) STRANGERS, THE FATHERLESS, AND WIDOWS

There were others of Israel who benefited from the tithe depending on their unfortunate circumstances. Due to their inability to support themselves, certain strangers, the fatherless, and widows benefited from the tithe.

This is recorded in Deuteronomy 26:12: **"When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled. . ."**

(4) CERTAIN SINGERS AND PORTERS

It is also interesting that even the tabernacle and temple singers and porters received a certain subsistence from the tithe as recorded in Nehemiah 13:5: **" . . . they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests."**

IV. THE PROPER ATTITUDE WHEN GIVING THE TITHE

(1) APPRECIATION

The most important attitude when tithing was their appreciation for what God had accomplished for them, in particular, their deliverance. This was Abram's attitude after his victory over the kings as recorded in Genesis 14:20:

"And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he (Abram) gave him (Melchizedek) tithes of all."

(2) WILLFUL SUBJECTION TO GOD

The second attitude when tithing was to be in willful subjection to God for His provisions. God had given Israel the land which had been previously inhabited by their enemies: **"But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people"** (Lev. 20:24).

Tithing was one way the Israelites could give back to God of that which God gave to them, namely of the increase of the crops of their fields and of their flocks and herds. Their prosperity was obtained only through God's goodness: **"thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day"** (Deut. 8:18).

Robert Jamieson, expounding upon the Old Testament practice of tithing, wrote: **"The whole produce of the land was subjected to the tithe tribute---it was a yearly rent which the Israelites, as tenants, paid to God, the owner of the land, and a thank offering they rendered to Him for the bounties of His providence."**

(3) HONESTY

A third attitude required when tithing was honesty. The Israelites were exhorted to be careful to give the tenth of their increase and nothing less. In doing so, they would reap a great promise in which God attached to the practice in Deuteronomy 14:22: **"Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year."**

(4) THE FEAR OF GOD

The fourth valuable attitude when

tithing (surely, there are more) was to learn to honor, respect, and reverence God for His bountifulness toward them: **"And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always"** (Deut. 14:23).

V. TITHING DURING CHRIST'S EARTHLY MINISTRY

(1) PHARISEES TITHED TO JUSTIFY THEIR SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

During Christ's earthly ministry, the Jews were still under the "Mosaic law" and were required to tithe. Christ's death fulfilled the law's requirement.

It is interesting to note that every reference to tithing in the Gospels (there are only three) was pointed out by Christ Himself. These references by Christ were not complimentary for He saw how the practice of tithing was greatly abused.

The first reference is Christ's parable of the Pharisee [a strict Jewish religious leader] and the publican [a Roman tax collector] praying in the temple. The Pharisee bragging about his own righteousness arrogantly stated: **"I give tithes of all that I possess"** (Luke 18:12).

One must note that tithing, in and of itself, will not please God. Tithing to exalt one's self-righteousness as the hypocritical Pharisees did is especially repugnant to God.

Christ pointed out that the publican's prayer was more profitable to the publican than the Pharisee's of himself. The publican, who certainly did not measure up to the Pharisee's religious works, received a far greater benefit.

Our Lord declared this of the publican: **"I tell you, this man (publican) went down to his house justified (judicially pronounced righteous) rather than the other (Pharisee): for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased (humiliated); and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted"** (Luke 18:14).

(2) PHARISEES TITHED HYPOCRITICALLY

The second New Testament reference to tithing is Christ's rebuke of the Pharisees for their hypocritical tithing. **"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise (a plant useful as a spice and medicine) and cumin (seeds with aromatic flavor), and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone"** (Matt. 23:23).

The third of Christ's references is almost word-for-word of Matthew 23:23 and is quoted in Luke 11:42: **"But woe unto you, Pharisees! For ye tithe mint and rue (a plant with medicinal value)**

♦ (Continued on page 135)

The Tithe

(Continued from page 134) ♦

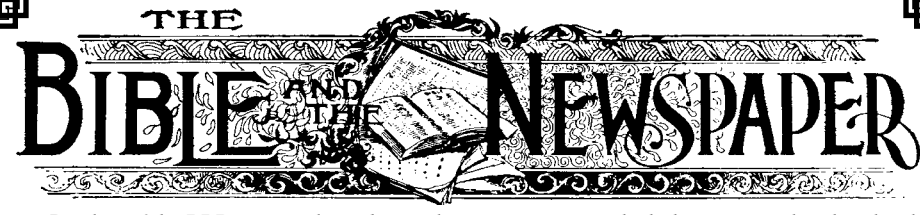
and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

All three of these New Testament references recording Christ's words concerning tithing should teach us a lesson. Just because we follow the letter of Biblical exhortations does not mean

we are right with God for He is able to interpret our pretentious attitudes.

There are other New Testament references to tithing but they all refer to Old Testament situations and do not apply to the New Testament except as our examples (See Hebrews 7:5-9). Be mindful that the experience of our Old Testament examples **"are written for our admonition"** (1 Cor. 10:11) and must be heeded.

(Continued in the next issue)



Readers of the BBB are urged to submit religious news items which they may read in their local paper or some other publication. In sending these please give the name of the publication as well as the date it was printed. We will not be able to print all which are submitted, but we welcome any item you may feel we should read.

Send them to The Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855-0039.

DIVERGENT BILLS SPOTLIGHT STEM-CELL DEBATE

(EP)—Congress is poised to deal soon with two stem-cell research bills, each of which would take the stem-cell debate in completely different directions.

One bill, H.R. 810, would increase the number of embryonic stem-cell lines available for federally funded research and bring to an end the president's policy placing limits on funding to certain already-existing lines.

The other, H.R. 596, the National Cord Blood Stem Cell Bank Network bill, champions the use of stem cells derived from umbilical-cord blood, setting up a registry for researchers and doctors.

Which way will Congress go?

Pro-life groups say H.R. 810, which deals with embryonic stem-cell research, is anti-life because human embryos are destroyed in the process.

The cord blood bill pleases pro-lifers and is completely without controversy.

"It is always wrong for government to promote the destruction of innocent human life, which embryonic stem-cell research does," said Richard Doerflinger, deputy director of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. "To do so when a clear majority of the taxpayers themselves reject this approach would be especially irresponsible.

"Congress should not be misled on this important issue," he added. "Most Americans oppose federal funding of research which requires destroying human embryos."

Indeed, a recent poll commissioned by the bishops, shows that when Americans find out human embryos are killed in embryonic stem-cell research, 52 percent oppose federal funding of it, while just 36 percent support it.

PARENTS RULE IN MARYLAND SEX-ED BATTLE

(EP)—Laura Quigley wasn't interested in political activism until she heard a Maryland

talk radio host describe what her two children would soon learn in school: People determine their sex by "sensing" whether they are male or female; sex play between same-sex adolescents is normal; teenagers should always wear a condom when engaging in vaginal, oral, or anal sex, as if those were expected practices. Quigley couldn't believe her ears. "I was in total amazement," she said.

Amazement turned to anger for more parents when they learned about a new sex-education curriculum the Montgomery County School Board had approved and planned to implement in May 2005. Quigley and other parents formed an organization called Citizens for a Responsible Curriculum (CRC), which eventually filed a lawsuit against the school board, seeking to derail the curriculum. A district judge on May 6 ruled in favor of CRC in what Mathew Staver of the Florida-based Liberty Counsel called "the most significant curriculum decision ever rendered." The school system halted the program one day before it was scheduled to begin.

The pilot program for middle schools and high schools would have taught that homosexuality is not a choice, and that religious groups such as "fundamentalists and evangelicals" are intolerant because they teach homosexuality is wrong. High-school students would have also watched a video in which a young teacher demonstrates condom use on a cucumber and tells teens that buying condoms "isn't as scary as you might think."

A 27-member committee spent three years developing the curriculum, which included supplemental resources from groups like Planned Parenthood and the Family Pride Coalition.

Staver said that a member of Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX) submitted material for the curriculum that was rejected because of its "ex-gay perspective. . . . Anything from any conservative or Christian viewpoint was flatly refused."

One such viewpoint came from Warren Throckmorton, associate professor of psychology at Grove City College in Pennsylvania. Throckmorton wrote an article published by the American Psychological Association in 2002 that presented evidence suggesting homosexuality is not "in-born" and that homosexuals can change their sexual orientation. A member of the citizen's committee submitted the paper for inclusion in the curriculum's supplemental resources. The committee rejected the article.

Throckmorton then wrote a 51-page critique of the proposed curriculum, criticizing the committee for "systematically eliminating any view of homosexuality other than the in-born, hard-wired view." U.S. District Judge Alexander Williams ruled that the curriculum was biased in its teaching about homosexuality and "presents only one view on the subject—that homosexuality is a natural and correct moral lifestyle—to the exclusion of other perspectives."

Parents in favor of the curriculum decried the judge's decision. "It looks like we're in Kansas after all," Charlotte Fremaux, a high-school parent, told "The Washington Post." "I'm appalled. I'm appalled. Next, they'll be challenging evolution." Other curriculum supporters accused opponents of intolerance and said the group represented a small fringe of conservatives.

But Quigley said more than 4,000 people signed a petition opposing the curriculum, and that CRC has conservative, liberal, religious, and nonreligious members. As for the accusation of intolerance, "the exact opposite occurred," Throckmorton said. "It's very possible to have respect for people without indoctrinating students with one view of homosexuality," he said. "It's very clear that the committee was intolerant of any other views than its own."

Staver, whose Liberty Counsel represented the plaintiffs, said the decision was "exceptionally broad" and was "the first of its kind to stop any sex-ed curriculum." Staver added that while other parents shouldn't "rush to the courts," they should be ready to challenge sex-ed curricula "carefully and strategically."

U.S. HOUSE VOTES TO FUND EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH, PRESIDENT VOWS TO VETO

(EP)—The U.S. House of Representatives voted May 24 to lift limits on embryonic stem cell research, a measure supporters said could accelerate cures for diseases but opponents said would federally fund a form of abortion.

Even before the bill was passed by the House, President Bush said he would veto it, but that didn't stop its approval by a 238-194 vote. The vote tally was far short of the two-thirds majority needed to override a veto.

"This bill would take us across a critical ethical line by creating new incentives for the ongoing destruction of emerging human life," the president said. "Crossing this line would be a great mistake."

Rep. Dan Lungren, R-Sacramento, said he opposed the legislation even though it could

potentially help members of his own family, including an older brother with Parkinson's disease.

"The worst mistakes we've ever made in the history of this nation have been when we have defined a part of the human family as less than fully human, and done things to them that we would not allow done to ourselves," Lungren said.

Conservative and Christian groups wasted no time denouncing the House action. Concerned Women for America (CWA) issued a statement saying they "stood with the president not to use tax dollars to kill innocent human life."

SUPREME COURT TO CONSIDER PARENTAL NOTIFICATION AND ABORTION

(EP)—Pro-life groups are expressing pleasant surprise over the Supreme Court's decision to consider a case involving New Hampshire's parental notification law.

The case is expected to go before the justices in the next term, beginning this fall.

The Supreme Court has not been anxious to tackle abortion cases lately. The last major Supreme Court abortion case was heard five years ago, and the justices split on the case 5-4.

Earlier this year, justices declined to hear a challenge to the Roe v. Wade ruling by Norma McCorvey, the woman known as "Jane Roe" in the case. McCorvey, now a Christian who says she regrets her decision to abort and to be at the center of the case, had hoped that she would have special legal standing to challenge the historic ruling. The justices ruled otherwise.

In this case, justices will review a 2003 New Hampshire law that an appeals court ruled was unconstitutional because it didn't provide an exception to protect the minor's health in the event of a medical emergency.

Parental consent and pro-life activists say they welcome the review. "I am absolutely elated," New Hampshire Republican state Rep. Barbara Hagan, a longtime pro-life activist from Manchester, told the Associated Press. "It gives back parental authority, which has been usurped and taken away by laws, and lack of laws, that are assuming that parents have no right to know what their minor children are doing."

However, the New Hampshire chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union says it also is pleased that the case will come up for review, saying it will "clarify" the parental notification issue.

HOUSE CONSIDERS PROTECTING PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(EP)—A member of the U.S. House of Representatives has introduced legislation that would take away from the nation's courts the power to rule on the constitutionality of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Article III Section 2 of the Constitution gives Congress the power to place certain limits on the courts, and that's what Congressman Todd Akin of Missouri hopes to do.

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"You can say the pledge if you want to," he said. "But obviously, I think we've gone too far if the court starts to use the First Amendment to say that kids cannot say something... instead of to protect free speech. That's why we're taking this action."

Last year, the Supreme Court considered whether schoolchildren should be allowed to say the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. In the end, the high court dodged the issue, declaring that the plaintiff, Michael Newdow, did not have standing. That effectively left "under God" in the pledge.

There is bi-partisan support for Akin's bill and North Carolina Congressman Mike McIntyre, D-N.C., said it's time the courts are prevented from excising God from the pledge.

"The appellate courts," he said, "should not—and will not under this law—get away with removing Him from our most sacred, patriotic vow, the Pledge of Allegiance." Akin believes his legislation can stand up to challenges by those who want to remove God from the public square.

"First of all, they have to overthrow that entire current practice and ignore the Constitution," he said. "But when they get done doing those two things, they run smack dab into the pledge. And do you really want to be out in front on the Pledge of Allegiance?"

Both Congressmen see strong House support for the bill, which already has about 150 cosponsors.

The Senate will be more challenging, but Sen. Jon Kyl, R-Ariz., has agreed to champion the bill.

GROUP REVISES RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION LIST

WASHINGTON (RNS)---An independent federal watchdog group announced last week that Uzbekistan has been added to and India dropped from its annual list of countries that have "engaged in or tolerated systematic and egregious violations" of religious freedom.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom presented its recommendations regarding "countries of particular concern" during a news conference at the National Press Club.

By law, the U.S. secretary of state must consider the written report and take appropriate action within 180 days.

The commission reaffirmed its 2004 recommendations that the State Department designate Burma, the People's Republic of China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Turkmenistan and Vietnam as countries of particular concern.

COUNTRIES TO BE CONSIDERED:

According to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom the following countries should be listed as "countries of particular concern," a designation that can lead to economic sanctions:

Burma. In some areas, children of Christians and Muslims are taken from

parents and forcibly converted to Buddhism.

China. Every religious community in China is subject to restrictions, discrimination and state control.

Iran. The government engages in "detention, torture and execution... based primarily or entirely upon the religion of the accused."

North Korea. "Freedom of religion or belief is essentially non-existent."

Sudan. The government violates freedom of religion or belief against those who do not follow the government's extremist interpretation of Islam.

Saudi Arabia. The government continues to be involved in financing activities throughout the world that support extreme religious intolerance.

Vietnam. The government harasses, detains, imprisons and discriminates against practitioners of all religious communities.

Eritrea. The government bans activities for all unregistered religious groups and has closed their places of worship.

Pakistan. The government does not provide an adequate response to vigilante violence perpetrated by Sunni Muslim militants.

Turkmenistan. "President Saparmurat Niyazov's monopoly of power... over Turkmen society renders independent religious activity impossible."

Uzbekistan. The government exercises "a high degree of control over the manner in which the Islamic faith is practiced."

Source: www.uscifr.gov via Western Recorder, May 17, 2005

ANTI-SEMITIC ACTS INCREASE

A new Anti-Defamation League (ADL) report shows that anti-Semitic incidents in the United States jumped 17 percent last year but anti-Semitic attitudes dipped 3% presenting an anti-Jewish climate that is tepid compared to that of Europe.

Two recent studies, for instance, showed anti-Semitic violence in Britain increased by 50% in 2004 and 60% in France. Though the 1,821 incidents in the ADL's 2004 report, released at the beginning of the month, represent the highest total in nine years, its survey of anti-Semitic sentiment dropped in nearly every category.

The survey of 1,600 American adults found that 14% of Americans, or almost 35 million people, hold views that are "unquestionably anti-Semitic" as opposed to 17% who were classified as such in 2002. For instance, 15% of the general population believe Jews hold "too much power in the US" in comparison to 20% two years ago.

The anti-Semitic incidents tracked include criminal complaints filed with police and non-criminal reports made to ADL field offices.

While vandalism increased only from 628 to 644 incidents over the last year, harassment—including threats, hate propaganda and assaults directed against individuals and institutions—increased from 929 to 1,177.

Attacks, including vandalism, threats and slurs, were greater in places with large Jewish

populations: New York (350), New Jersey (297), California (237) and Florida (173).

"At a time when anti-Semitism is at a high in France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Canada and other countries, it is disturbing to see that it is increasing in America as well," said ADL national director Abraham Foxman in a statement. "While most of the incidents are less violent than those experienced recently by the Jewish communities of Europe, it is troubling that so many people in this country feel a need to act out their anti-Jewish animus in ways large and small."

Unlike in Europe, however, the report didn't link the anti-Semitic activity to Muslim extremists or anti-Israel feeling.

It attributed the findings largely to "stepped-up activity by organized neo-Nazi hate groups and a spike in reports of anti-Jewish harassment and intimidation in America's schools."

"Clearly, events taking place on the ground have affected the incidence of anti-Semitic events in Europe much more than in the United States," explained Laura Kam Issacharoff of the ADL's Israel office. "In the US you have a press that's basically pro-Israel, or not against Israel, and a government that is strongly in support of Israel," as is most of the public according to opinion polls.

"In Europe," she said, "the starting point is very different."

(Hilary Leila Krieger via *The International Jerusalem Post*, April 8-14, 2005)

IMMIGRATION TROJAN HORSE

Unbeknownst to most Americans, and even many members of Congress, immigration is very much a part of the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) agreement, which the White House and its so-called free trade allies in Congress and on Wall Street are pushing furiously to enact before the end of the year.

You won't find immigration listed openly as a central component of the FTAA. That is by design. FTAA proponents know that if they publicly declared their ultimate goal—eventually to have completely open borders throughout the hemisphere—their project would never get out of the starting gate.

So, since the FTAA's launch at the 1994 Miami Summit of the Americas (hosted by President Bill Clinton), the immigration plan has been furtively kept in the shadows.

(*The New American*, June 13, 2005)

FOR FAILING TO PROTECT OUR BORDERS, WE ARE NOW LESS FREE

On May 11, President Bush signed the REAL ID Act into law, which for the first time in U.S. history establishes a national identification card and a corresponding central identification database. Attached to the War Supplemental Spending bill, the REAL ID Act was promoted in Congress as the solution to the serious problem of illegal aliens obtaining state driver's licenses.

With driver's licenses, illegal aliens not only can (and do) register to vote and gain access to jobs and welfare benefits, but also pose an

increased security dilemma. Proponents of the measure argued that the answer to the problem was for the federal government to mandate national standards to the states for driver's licenses.

Congressman Ron Paul (R-Texas) parted ways with many conservatives in the house who supported the bill, pointing out that it is an assault on the Constitution and the principle of federalism. Rep. Paul noted: "Proponents of the REAL ID Act continue to make the preposterous claim that the bill does not establish a national ID card. This is dangerous and insulting nonsense. Let's get the facts straight: The REAL ID Act transforms state motor vehicle departments into agents of the federal government. Nationalizing standards for driver's licenses and birth certificates in a federal bill created a national ID system, pure and simple. Having the name of your particular state on the ID is meaningless window dressing."

Paul continued: "Federally imposed standards for driver's licenses and birth certificates make a mockery of federalism and the 10th Amendment. While states technically are not forced to accept the federal standards, any refusal to comply would mean their residents could not get a job, receive Social Security, or travel by plane. So rather than imposing a direct mandate on the states, the federal government is blackmailing them into complying with federal dictates."

(*The New American*, June 13, 2005)

EU POLICE TO BE ABOVE THE LAW?

The history of Anglo-Saxon common law, to which America's concept of liberty under law is heir, describes a long, painful struggle to rein in the unaccountable powers of government and its agents. The European Union, by way of contrast, descends from the French Revolution and its Communist offspring, which promoted the vision of an all-powerful state.

Under European Communities Order 1997, entitled "Immunities and Privileges of the European Police Office," members of the EU's police force (the Europol) "shall enjoy immunity from suit and legal process in respect of acts, including words written or spoken, done by them in the exercise of their official functions." Veritas Group, an organization of British "Euro-skeptics," contends that this grants Europol officers "authority to steal, lie and even kill in the course of their duties" and that "the public will have no right of redress."

(*The New American*, May 30, 2005)

GOOD ENOUGH FOR GOVERNMENT WORK

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is doing its part to keep criminals off the streets—by hiring them. During its short lifetime, the DHS's Transportation Security Administration (TSA) acquired a well-earned reputation for hiring petty thieves to inspect baggage at airports.

Now we learn that the Federal Emergency

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Management Agency (FEMA), which has been placed under Homeland Security's umbrella, has hired recidivist criminals to work as disaster-relief inspectors. "Government inspectors entrusted to enter disaster victims' homes and verify damage claims include criminals with records for embezzlement, drug dealing and robbery," reported the Miami *Sun-Sentinel* on April 24.

According to Dan Craig, director of recovery programs for FEMA, "Our contract inspectors are our first line of accountability." In hiring inspectors from one of three Washington-area firms, FEMA is required by law to subject applicants to a rigorous background check. Yet the *Sun-Sentinel*--in an investigation it conducted despite a complete lack of cooperation from the agency---"found 30 inspectors or managers with criminal records out of 133 it was able to identify. . . .17 had criminal histories at the time they were hired. At least four lost their jobs for arrests after they were hired, including one scheduled for sentencing May 6 in California for child molestation, and two convicted of federal bribery charges for promising higher FEMA payments in exchange for money."

(*The New American*, May 30, 2005)

TOP ENGLISH TEACHERS SEE VALUE OF TEACHING BIBLE AS LITERATURE

Some of the nation's top English teachers say the Bible should be part of any high school class covering the finest works of Western literature, according to a new report issued by the Bible Literacy Project.

The Bible is "one of the basic pieces of literature that in Western civilization has influenced laws, morals, politics and other literature," says Laurance Levy, a teacher at McDonogh School in Owings Mills, Md., who participated in the national survey.

Researchers spoke with 41 teachers in 10 states, from both religious and nonreligious backgrounds, who are regarded as outstanding by colleagues. Teachers at four private schools and 30 public schools were part of the study.

Nine out of 10 teachers who participated argued that knowledge of the Bible is crucial for a good education; 40 of the 41 teachers said Bible literacy is an educational advantage.

The study by the Bible Literacy Project, backed by Wall Street financier John Templeton, was conducted in tandem with a poll by the Gallup Organization that quizzed 1,002 teenagers on their knowledge of the Bible.

The Gallup poll found that fewer than half of the teens surveyed knew that the Bible says Jesus turned water into wine at a wedding. Nearly, two-thirds couldn't identify a quote from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, or the relation of the road to Damascus to the Apostle Paul's conversion.

The Gallup survey, with a margin of error of 3 percentage points, also found that

63 percent of private schools in the United States offer classes on the Bible as literature, but only 26 percent of public schools do.

(By Amy Doolittle via *The Washington Times*)

STUDY FINDS G-RATED MOVIES MORE PROFITABLE THAN R-RATED MOVIES

(EP)—A study released June 7 by The Dove Foundation found that the average G-rated movie was 11 times more profitable than its R-rated counterpart.

The study examines the costs and revenues associated with the 200 most widely distributed films each year released by the major Hollywood studios from 1989 to 2003. There were 2,982 films studied. The number was less than 3,000 because some movies were among the top 200 for two years in a row.

The average G-rated movie earned a \$79 million profit, while the average R-rated film earned only \$6.9 million, the study says.

However, one of the reasons for the wide disparity could be the number of films in each category. Slightly more than half, or 51.4 percent, of the releases examined received an R-rating from the Motion Picture Association of America. Only about 4.1 percent of the movies were G-rated.

Hollywood does seem to be getting the message, though slowly. The number of G-rated movies has increased in the past five years, and the number of R-rated films released has fallen.

Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council welcomed the study. "While the media and politicians like to divide the country up by red and blue states, the simple fact is that parents everywhere want to be able to occasionally bring their children to a movie that has no gratuitous sex or violence but simply entertains," he said. "Too often on our televisions and in movie theaters family values are ignored, but now that we are responding with our pocketbooks Hollywood is finally taking notice."

MINISTRYWATCH.COM WARNS DONORS ABOUT JOYCE MEYER MINISTRIES

(EP)—Wall Watchers, a Christian financial watchdog organization, is warning donors not to support Joyce Meyer Ministries/Life in the Word, Inc. (JMM). Wall Watchers' CEO Rusty Leonard said information about extravagant spending on salaries and other benefits for Joyce Meyer motivated the donor alert.

Leonard said investigations by the Jefferson County, Mo., tax assessor and the "St. Louis Post-Dispatch" indicate that Meyer's ministry lacks proper board governance and oversight. He cited Tax Assessor Randy Holman's assertion that Joyce Meyer Ministries is in fact a business and not a church.

Holman told the "St. Louis Post-Dispatch" that "the ministry is a business -- the business of selling Joyce Meyer." Holman argues that Meyer's headquarters has no public services, and that its chapel is used only by the 600

employees who produce and sell tapes and books, broadcast Meyer's television program, and collect money for the ministries.

CALIFORNIA GAY MARRIAGE BILL DEFEATED

(EP)—A bill that would have set the stage to create gay marriage in California has died in the liberal California Legislature.

Randy Thomasson, executive director of the Campaign for Children and Families, said AB 19 fell at least four votes short of the number it needed for passage (the Legislature is still finalizing the votes) with a dozen Democratic members either voting against it or abstaining.

"We're praising God, and we're thankful to the thousands and thousands of Californians who took time to pick up the phone and call their legislators," Thomasson said. "We're glad for pastors that met with legislators in their offices."

AB 19 would have deleted the phrase "a man and a woman" from the California marriage law, Thomasson said. "So it would have redefined marriage to make homosexual marriage licenses legal in every single California county."

Karen Holgate, director of legislative affairs for the California Family Council, said AB 19 would have declared that marriage—to quote from the text—"is a personal relation arising out of a civil contract between two persons."

"We know that many, many Californians called their lawmakers," she said. "The offices were saying they were getting a lot of calls from our side. This was not just our success, it was a success for every person in the state, and everyone who took part deserves credit."

The bill's sponsor, openly-homosexual Assemblyman Mark Leno, was given plenty of chances to get his bill passed.

NATION BRIEFS

(EP)—North Carolina's most populous county voted to add "sexual orientation" to its nondiscrimination policy despite strong objections from Republicans and Christian activists who spoke at the 5-hour county commission meeting. The new policy means Mecklenburg County cannot discriminate in hiring and personnel decisions on the basis of sexual orientation, in addition to race, color, sex, religion, national origin and age. The change was approved along party lines, 6-3, on May 17. Mecklenburg County becomes only the 3rd of North Carolina's 100 counties to take this step. About 150 counties, cities, and towns in the United States include "sexual orientation" in their non-discrimination policies.

(EP)—Florida Gov. Jeb Bush signed a bill May 25 that requires doctors to tell parents when their minor daughters seek abortions. The law, which takes effect July 1, applies to girls under 18 who are not married and do not already have children. Doctors are required to notify a parent in person or by phone 48 hours before performing an abortion. Priests for Life's Fr. Frank

Pavone was among the many pro-life leaders praising Bush on the action. "Governor Bush recognizes the importance of the role of parents in the health decisions of their minor children. This new law respects that role, and will also save the lives of unborn children and protect their parents and grandparents from the lifetime of regret that abortion brings," he said. Florida passed similar legislation in 1999, but courts ruled it was a violation of the Florida constitution. In 2004, Florida voters approved a constitutional amendment providing an exemption to the constitution's privacy guarantee, making this and other abortion restrictions more likely to withstand a court challenge.

(EP)—A 13-year-old home schooler from Cottonwood, Minn., has won the 2005 National Geographic Bee. Nathaniel Cornelius tackled this brain-bender for the win: "Lake Gatun, an artificial lake that constitutes part of the Panama Canal system, was created by damming which river?" The answer: the Chagres River. Nathaniel, who won a \$25,000 college scholarship, represented the Marshall Area Home Educators Association, and beat out students from all over the country. The geography whiz also plays piano and classical guitar, and is interested in photography.

(EP)—New York City and the state of New York are getting in the business of pushing social change in the nation's corporations. On May 19, Delta shareholders voted down a proposal aimed at stopping what some call "gender-identified discrimination." The proposal was backed by five pension funds operated by New York City and additional funds with the state of New York.

This isn't the first time New York City has urged companies to change policies on sexual orientation and gender identity. In fact, 30 companies have amended or agreed to amend their policies, according to New York City Comptroller William C. Thompson, Jr. The most recent was Toys "R" Us.

(EP)—The representative assembly of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in May approved by voice vote a resolution supporting the legalization of gay marriage.

The proposal came from the organization's gay and lesbian caucus, and will go to the organization's directors in June.

(EP)—Wall Watchers, a Christian financial watchdog organization, is warning donors not to support Benny Hinn Ministries/World Outreach Church (BHM). The Donor Alert was issued through its website. Wall Watchers' CEO Rusty Leonard said, "Recent facts and allegations aired on 'NBC Dateline' -- coupled with MinistryWatch.com's previous concerns about the self-serving 'prosperity theology' taught by Benny Hinn -- have caused MinistryWatch.com to recommend that donors prayerfully consider redirecting their gifts to one of the many biblically-based ministries that are not only more transparent in their dealings with the

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public but also treat donor's funds as a sacred trust dedicated exclusively for the Lord's work." Leonard said Hinn and his family "enjoy a lavish lifestyle with funds intended for charitable purposes, that he preaches a fraudulent, self-serving version of the Bible, that he manipulates individuals at 'healing crusades' for personal gain, that he makes unsubstantiated claims of healings, and that the ministry is nontransparent and lacks independent board oversight." All of these factors went in to the ministry's decision to issue a Donor Alert. Leonard said he "also recommends that all Christians join with it in praying specifically that Benny Hinn and his family acknowledge their failures in the stewardship of the money entrusted to them by donors, and humbly submit themselves to a process of personal repentance and restoration."

(EP)—The Hoosier State recently got caught in the cross-hairs of the culture wars with two separate court cases dealing with pro-life issues and religious liberty.

First, an Indianapolis judge ruled on May 31 that Planned Parenthood of Indiana must let state officials review the medical records of 84 girls younger than 14 who visited Planned Parenthood clinics.

Then, across town in a separate action, the Indiana affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit asking a federal judge to bar references to Jesus Christ in the daily prayers delivered before the state House of Representatives.

(EP)—Texas Gov. Rick Perry put his signature to legislation restricting abortions and added his backing to a measure barring same-sex marriage in front of some 1000 people gathered at Calvary Christian Academy in Ft. Worth. Texas already had a parental notification bill, approved in 1999. The new measure requires a parent to provide written consent for unmarried girls under 18. Joe Pojman, Executive Director of the Texas Alliance for Life, praised the governor's action, saying that the bill was long overdue. "A nurse at that school or any school in Texas may not dispense an aspirin without the written consent of a parent," he said. "Now this brings abortion up to the same standard of care for minors."

(EP)—Gerardo Flores, 19, was convicted of two counts of murder for causing his teenage girlfriend to miscarry two fetuses by stepping on her stomach. The Lufkin, Texas, teen will receive an automatic life sentence under the state's 2003 fetus protection law. Pro-lifers advocated for the law, but this implementation of it was met with mixed emotions from the pro-life community because Flores' girlfriend, Erica Basoria, 17, acknowledged asking Flores to help end her pregnancy. She could not be prosecuted because of her legal right to abortion. Attorneys on both sides called the case a

"tragedy." The 2003 Texas law defines an embryo or fetus as an "individual" and allows criminal prosecution or civil action for a preventable injury or death of a fetus.

(WDN) A publisher is touting a new edition of the Gospels that identifies Christ as a woman named Judith Christ of Nazareth.

LBI Institute says its version, Judith Christ of Nazareth, The Gospels of the Bible, Corrected to Reflect that Christ Was a Woman, Extracted from Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, takes Thomas Jefferson's edited Gospel one step futher by "correcting" the gender of Christ and God.

"This long-awaited revised text of the Gospels makes the moral message of Christ more accessible to many, and more illuminating to all," says Billie Shakespeare, vice president for the publisher, in a statement. "It is empowering. We published this new Bible to acknowledge the rise of women in society."

WASHINGTON – Islam is on the move in Mexico and throughout Latin America, making dramatic gains in converting the native population, increasing immigration, establishing businesses and charities and attracting attention from U.S. government officials who have asked their neighbors to the south to keep an eye on foreign Muslim groups.

NEW YORK - Across the United States, tens of thousands of Muslims are practicing their faith behind bars. Islam is most likely to win American converts there, according to U.S. Muslim leaders, and the religion has for decades been a regular part of prison culture.

But the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks have brought new scrutiny to Muslim inmates, many of whom are black Americans. While prison chaplains of various faiths argue that Islam offers a path to rehabilitation, others say it has the potential to turn felons into terrorists.

WASHINGTON – Hispanics now account for one out of seven Americans and will continue to drive overall population growth for the foreseeable future, posing numerous economic challenges and benefits, according to demographers' analysis of preliminary U.S. Census estimates.

High birth rates and rapid immigration helped swell the nation's Hispanics population to 41.3 million, representing half of the country's population growth between July 2003 and July 2004. (*Tupelo Daily Journal*, Jun. 9, 2005)

WORLD BRIEFS

(EP)—A Danish Lutheran minister who publicly denied the existence of God has been restored to his church. Rev. Thorkild Grosboell was suspended by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in June 2004 because he said in an interview that "there is no heavenly God." He was restored May 20 after renewing his vows, though he will remain under the

Good Christian Music Free!



Brother Joe and Sister Kathy Martinez have now made available two audio CDs that contain the music off of their three albums: *Jesus Christ, The Lord of Glory*; *Let Your Treasure Be In God*; and *A Taste of Heaven*. These are being made available through the *Bookstore*. We only ask \$2.50 to cover postage and mailing. Also a CD of just the music (no vocals) is available for the songs from the album *A Taste of Heaven*.

Most of these songs have been aired on the *Berea Baptist Broadcast* over the last several years. We appreciate Brother and Sister Martinez for making these good Christian songs available.

supervision of a bishop.

(WDN) A Baptist lay pastor in Bangladesh was beheaded by a group of assailants reportedly tied to a Muslim political party bent on creating a radical Islamic state.

Dulal Sarkar, 35, was the second Christian leader killed in the Asian country in the past year, according to Compass Direct, a U.S.-based news service that monitors persecution of Christians. Sarkar was attacked as he returned home from discussing his faith with villagers near Jalalpur.

The assailants were identified by a source as a group of 10 Muslims tied to the Jamaat-e-Islami political party, the nation's third largest and a member of the coalition government.

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 5-1-2005 to 5-31-2005

Beginning Balance.....	\$2,641.33
RECEIPTS:	
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY.....	100.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS.....	225.00
Berea B. C., Westpoint, TN.....	50.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY.....	275.00
TOTAL.....	650.00
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time.....	410.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES.....	410.00
Interest.....	2,881.33
Less Corbin, KY fund balance.....	+43
ENDING BALANCE.....	2,881.76
Less Corbin, KY fund balance.....	-891.52
ENDING BALANCE.....	\$1,990.24

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance.....	\$1,051.52
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT.....	160.00
ENDING BALANCE.....	\$891.52

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 5-1-2005 to 5-31-2005

Beginning Balance.....	\$111.59
RECEIPTS:	
Arthur D. Richardson, Cedarville, WV.....	100.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL.....	27.75
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS.....	1,100.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL.....	60.00
Berea M. B. C., Mansfield, OH.....	50.00
Berea M. B. C., Westpoint, TN.....	150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX.....	100.00
Bible Believer's B. C., Naples, ID.....	150.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV.....	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY.....	150.00
Cedar Grove B. C., Millport, AL.....	50.00
Central Avenue B. C., Tampa, FL.....	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL.....	25.00
Faith M. B. C., Clarksville, TN.....	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR.....	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME.....	20.00
George Wells, Ithaca, NY.....	26.00

Grace B. C., Corbin, KY.....	100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC.....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK.....	45.00
Hillcrest B. C., Winston-Salem, NC.....	50.00
Joseph Jurzec, Lake-in-the-Hills, IL.....	200.00
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC.....	25.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM.....	100.00
Leston Farrell, Des Allemands, LA.....	100.00
Lia Mari James, Aztec, NM.....	40.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM.....	300.00
Mrs. T Jean Ruley, Hartelle, AL.....	18.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH.....	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN.....	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN.....	50.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA.....	40.00
Paul Sandelin, Naples, ID.....	76.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL.....	100.00
Rodney Paschal, Columbus, MS.....	29.00
South Park M. B. C., Seattle, WA.....	25.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS.....	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Galena, OH.....	150.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL.....	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX.....	30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC.....	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Warren, OH.....	75.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC.....	200.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA.....	25.00
Wayne Huffman, McNeil, AR.....	40.00
Subscriptions.....	752.00
Anon.....	1,000.00
Dividing checks.....	160.00
Sub Total.....	\$6,598.75
TOTAL.....	\$6,710.34
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing.....	992.00
Postage.....	1,011.93
Supplies.....	61.09
Wages.....	3,680.00
FICA.....	299.89
Dividing Checks.....	164.95
Total Expenditures.....	6,209.86
Bank Charges.....	500.48
ENDING BALANCE.....	-17.53
ENDING BALANCE.....	\$482.95

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Salem Missionary Baptist Church of Willow Hill, IL will be having their annual Singles Conference August 11th thru the 13th. Bro. Mark Campbell will be one of the speakers. For more information contact Pastor Billy Holbrook at (618) 592-3806 or email holfam5@shawneelink.net.

The Northside Baptist Church of Elkton, KY will be having their annual Bible Conference August 4th thru 6th. Services will start at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, 9:30 a.m. Friday, and 10:00 a.m. Saturday. A noon meal and supper will be provided Friday and a noon meal Saturday. Speakers are Elders Gary Allen, Jerry Asberry, Mark Clark Sr., Larry Ellis, Dan Gordon, Lee Hammel, Bob Keller, Garner Smith, Don Titus and Randy Titus.

For more information contact pastor Irving Cummins at (270) 265-9665 or (270) 791-8474 or by email at icummins@commandnet.net.

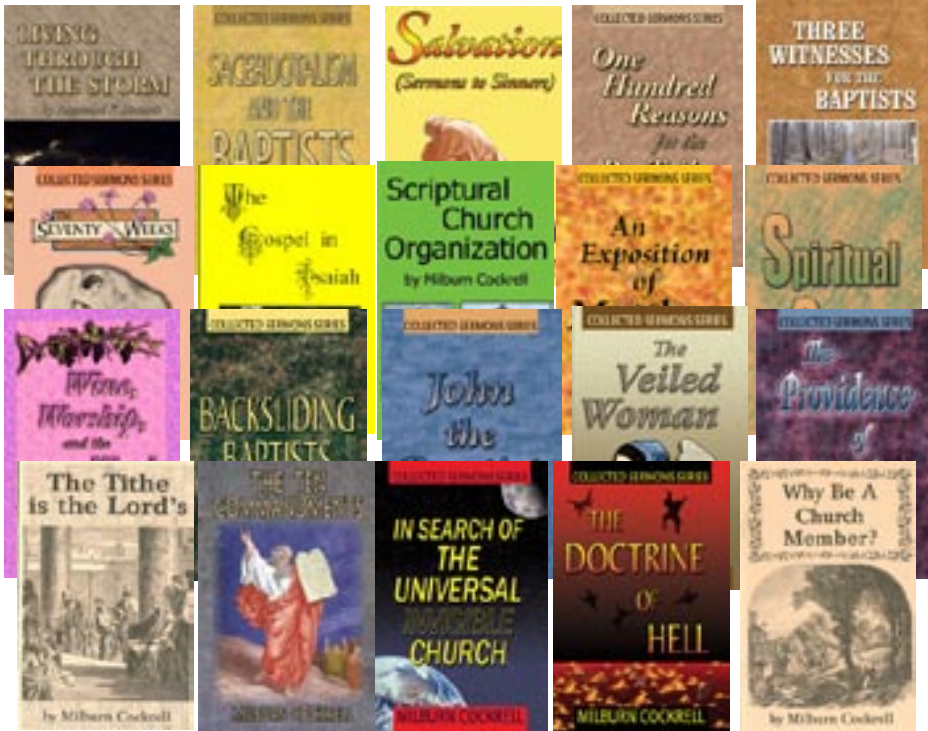


Berea Baptist Church Bookstore

PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855 (662) 282-7794

Special Summer Sale on Our Publications

(These prices good through the month of July.)



On two or more copies of any of our publications these special prices are in effect until the last of July. The two copies can be any of our publications to qualify for this special pricing. See postage chart below for shipping and handling.

Titles by Milburn Cockrell

TITLE	RETAIL	SPECIAL
The Gospel in Isaiah.....	\$4.95.....	\$2.00
The Tithe is the Lord's	\$1.50.....	\$0.85
Why Be A Church Member?	\$1.50.....	\$0.85
The Ten Commandments	\$6.95.....	\$4.40
Scriptural Church Organization	\$6.95.....	\$4.40
Wine, Worship, and the Word	\$6.95.....	\$4.40
Salvation (Sermons to Sinners)	\$6.95.....	\$4.40
Backsliding Baptists	\$3.95.....	\$2.50
The Doctrine of Hell	\$3.95.....	\$2.50
In Search of the Universal, Invisible Church	\$3.95.....	\$2.50
John the Baptist	\$3.95.....	\$2.50
Spiritual Growth.....	\$3.95	\$2.50
An Exposition of Matthew 24.....	\$3.95	\$2.50
The Veiled Woman	\$3.95.....	\$2.50
100 Reasons for the Pre-Trib Rapture	\$3.95.....	\$2.50
The Providence of God.....	\$3.95	\$2.50
The Seventy Weeks	\$3.95.....	\$2.50
Sacerdotalism and the Baptists	\$4.95.....	\$3.15
The Second Coming of Christ	\$8.95.....	\$4.50

Titles by Raymond Bennett

Living through the Storm	\$5.25.....	\$3.30
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Titles by Curtis Pugh

Three Witnesses for the Baptists	\$7.95.....	\$5.00
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Shipping Chart

Order Value	Add	
Minimum	\$4.00	\$50.00-74.99.....\$6.00
\$25.00-49.99.....	\$5.00	\$75.00-99.99.....\$7.00
		\$100.00 and Up.....FREE

The Power of God

Wayne Reynolds of Foristell, Missouri

It is impossible to adequately describe the power of God. We can measure and describe all power on this earth, but we cannot measure or describe the power of God. Everything, except God is limited in power, but there is no limit to the power of God. God is the Almighty and can do anything He desires to do.



The Nature of God's Power

Job 23:13 reveals that God's power is absolute, **"...and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth."** The only limit to God's power is self-imposed, based on His personal desires. There is absolutely nothing God cannot do if it suits His purpose. Ephesians 3:20 states God is **"...able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think..."** What marvelous power! God can do such wonderful things that we cannot even **think** of them! Matthew 19:26 speaking of the salvation of sinners, states, **"...With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."**

Romans 1:20 describes God's power as **"eternal power"**, or unchanging. This means that God's power has not increased or decreased. His power is not like the power or strength of men. A person can gain strength as he exercises, or lose strength as he fails to exercise. But God's power and strength remains exactly the same at all times. He cannot gain power, for He already has all power. He cannot lose power or strength, for this would mean He does not have eternal power as described in Romans 1:20. Isaiah 40:28 declares, God **"...fainteth not, neither is weary."**

The Manifestations of God's Power

God's power is manifested in the material world. Job 26:7 states that God hung the earth upon nothing. This is a marvelousthingindeed. Everythingaman builds must be supported by something. In fact, everything a man builds must be supported by something *God* has already made! For example, man might build an enormous skyscraper, but that skyscraper is built on ground created by God with materials originally created by God. Man might build huge earth moving equipment; but that equipment is built out of the very material it will be moving! God has created the world out of absolutely nothing, and hung it upon absolutely nothing. Man goes into outer space and looks back at the earth and behold, it is hung upon nothing! God has created light, and darkness. He has created a thing called "time" that we use

to measure our lives. He has created the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the sea and all things thereon. Job 26:8 declares that God binds water in the thick clouds and the clouds are not rent under the weight of the waters. But most marvelous of all is that God created life. Genesis 2:7 states, **"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."** Jeremiah 32:17 correctly reflects God's power by stating, **"...there is nothing too hard for thee."**

In describing the material manifestations of God's power, we must agree with Job 26:14, **"Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?"**

God's power is also manifested in the spiritual world. Luke 1:35 records the amazing incarnation, not **"reincarnation"**, of Jesus Christ. God was made in the form of sinful man, yet without sin, Philippians 2:7,8. He was conceived in the womb of a virgin, born in Bethlehem, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, Luke 2:7. In process of time, He gave His life for sinners. The death of Christ does not reflect a change in the power of Christ, because He rose from the dead while He was dead! In John 10:18, Jesus said concerning His life; **"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again..."**

Romans 1:16 reveals that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. I Corinthians 1:18 states, **"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."** The Holy Spirit makes gospel preaching and witnessing effective, drawing sinners to Christ Who forgives sin.

This world is a better place because of the many people who are saved by the power of God. They hate sinfulness and strive to live holy and righteous lives before an all-powerful God. This is a force for good that is unstoppable. There are those who say the gospel and the power of God is empty and vain but the lives of saved people are an unanswerable argument in favor of the power of God. The Purpose of God's Material and Spiritual Creation

All things are created for the pleasure of God, not for the pleasure of man. In Revelation 4:11, the 24 elders worship God by saying, **"Thou are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."** Colossians 1:16, 17 states, **"...all things were created by him, and for him..."**

Objections to the Absolute Power of God

Many people believe that God has

◊ (Continued on page 140)



WORLD SCENE

By G. Russell Evans - Norfolk, Virginia

Illegal Immigration is a National Disgrace!



President Bush and Congress are to be blamed for illegal immigration. There is enough blame to go around.

GREED IS THE CREED

* The democrats want the illegal immigrants for the votes.

* The Republicans want them for the same purpose.

* Labor wants them for membership in their unions.

* Big business wants them for cheap labor.

* Universities want them for higher education grants.

Illegal immigration is a national disgrace! The World Trade Towers and the Pentagon nightmares of 9/11 should be a signature wake-up alarm against loose borders and undermanned and under trained security forces. Illegal immigration has a greater potential for catastrophe than 9/11.

BORDER PATROL

While Border Patrol agents are risking their lives day in and day out to protect our borders from invasion by millions of illegal immigrants, some politicians are undermining these efforts by refusing to support basic legislation to increase border security. Currently, as many as 1.1 million illegal aliens cross our borders each year and 12 million live in the United States.

They, the politicians, believe current levels of illegal immigration should be accepted. Some even believe illegal aliens should be given benefits, driver's licenses, even the right to become American citizens. Essentially they've given up on fighting illegal immigration and they are abandoning the war fought by our nation's Border Patrol agents.

THOUSANDS OF ILLEGAL ALIENS DAILY

Border Patrol agents apprehend thousands of illegal aliens every day - and many times these individuals possess prior, and often violent, criminal records: 53,000 criminals were apprehended in a six-month period last year. And every day, Border Patrol agents risk their lives to defend our borders and the sovereignty of our nation.

Let's remind lawmakers and the president that the basic role of government is defense of its citizenry and that the current immigration crisis isn't beyond our control... nor are our Border Patrol agents to blame for failing to stop the illegal aliens who violate our borders. Border Patrol agents are outnumbered and under funded.

And yet, President Bush chose to drastically scale back a request for an

additional 2,000 Border Patrol agents to defend some 2,000 miles of dangerous and lawless post along the U.S. and Mexican border.

MEXICO'S PRESIDENT

In his eloquent speech, Mexico's President, Vicente Fox, great buddy of President George W. Bush, called for a "New era of trust" - trust, trust, and more trust - to mark the new relationship between our two nations. That's noble, hard to deny - provided it's two ways.

Fox called for a United States demonstration of trust by cooperation with Mexican "migration" to America. He didn't say immigration. That's a dirty word, but that's what it is: People moving to a new country "In order to settle there."

Let's also have a "demonstration" of Mexican trust. For starters, Fox should quit providing "survival kits" to illegal immigrants - kits with ration, water and band-aids for survival after crossing the border into the U.S. southwest deserts.

With Fox on this trip was his foreign minister, George Castaneda, the Marxist and former New York University professor, advocating "rights" for illegal Mexican immigrants. He wants instate tuition rates for the illegals in California and an "end to border - sealing operations."

BUSH'S PUNCH LINES

One of Bush's punch lines for the illegals: "Fearful people build walls; confident people tear them down." How about this one: "Prudent people protect their country; greedy people prefer

profits."

Primarily, however, we want our president to enforce the immigration laws enacted by our representatives in the Congress - defend our borders, admit only legal immigrants, expel the illegals and absolutely, never even think of amnesty for the 3 million illegals now in the country.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION IS A NATIONAL DISGRACE!

Trust is a great virtue, but we should not be bamboozled by it. Ronald Reagan wisely said, "Trust but verify," and Thomas Fuller (1732) said, "Trust thyself only, and another shall not betray thee."

(Excerpts are from previous writings of Capt. Evans. He lives with his wife Anne in Norfolk, VA)

The Power of God

(Continued from page 139) ♦

"absolute power" in everything except those things concerning men. Many believe God has shown His power in the creation of this world, and the establishing of the laws of science that govern our world and give it stability. But they believe God is powerless when it comes to the salvation of souls, and in dealing with the human will. They use phrases such as: (1) The banners of God's army halt outside the little fortress of our hearts inviting us to surrender; His mighty love and grace and power wait for our decision. (2) We are bidden to make a choice. No man can choose for us. God Almighty cannot choose for you and me. I can put God Who made me, and Who gives me the breath I breathe at arms length and say, "I will not"; or I can turn to Him, through the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit and receive His salvation. (3) Omnipotence itself is powerless in the presence of stubbornness. Even a

Coming in the next issue...

On Top of the World by Milburn Cockrell

The Tithe Part 2 by Philip Parks

Tongues Have Ceased - The Scriptural Proof Part 1 by Lucien J. Le Sage Jr.

Searching for Truth in II Peter 2:1 by David G. Hoffman

The Baptist Doctrine of the Church Is Not Sacerdotalism by Raymond Bennett

Are You Forgiveness by R. F. Becker

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Mini-Edition	p. 125
On July 4, 2006 by Milburn Cockrell	p. 121
Religious Equality by Milburn Cockrell (sermon outline)	p. 126
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World Scene: Illegal Immigration is a National Disgrace! by G. Russell Evans ..	p. 140

child can raise its hand and shake its tiny fist in the face of God Almighty, and God Almighty can do nothing. (4) God votes for you, the devil votes against you, and you cast the deciding vote.

These four major objections to the absolute power of God are full of fallacies. We will discuss them one at a time.

Objection 1. This objection ignores the fact of total depravity. All are total sinners and are not seeking God to begin with. It is *because* God makes the first move toward the sinner that the sinner beholds his sinfulness and desires salvation. A sinner left to himself will never turn to Christ.

Objection 2. It is absolutely preposterous to speak of an *Almighty God* we can resist. If God is Almighty, He cannot be resisted.

Objection 3. It is a contradiction of terms to say that Omnipotence, which means all powerful, is powerless. Proverbs 21:1 states that God turns even the king any way He so desires, while Jeremiah 18:6-10 reveals that God can build or destroy any nation.

Objection 4. Biblical election is not God voting for us, Satan voting against us and us casting the deciding vote. Election is God choosing us to Himself, John 15:16. Satan had nothing to do with this election, for it took place before Satan was revealed as the fallen angel. We did not cast the deciding vote because the election took place before the foundation of the world.

Some people believe God elected His children according to His foreknowledge. That is, He elected those to salvation that He foreknew would believe. Psalm 14:1-3 is the perfect answer to this objection. This passage reveals that God looked down upon the children of men to see if there were any that would seek Him. He found absolutely none! *All* were without understanding, having done abominable works, *all* were corrupt, and *all* were altogether filthy! It is at this point that God elects His children to salvation. It is here that God bestows mercy on the undeserving, that He gives grace (undeserved favor) on His filthy, hell deserving creatures. He saves His elect, not because they deserve to be saved, or because they have worked to earn salvation. He saves them because He chooses to save them. John 15:16 states, "**Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit.**"

Conclusion

God's power is the confidence of the Christian. We do not trust in our wisdom, strength, or power to work out the problems of our lives. We turn to Almighty God for we know He has created this entire, complex universe by His power, He has saved us by His power, and He keeps us by His power. Therefore He will willingly use that same power to control the circumstances of our life.