

# The Berea Baptist Banner

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## This Time of Year

By Matthew Stepp  
of Given West Virginia

Well, it's that time of year again. Now that the snows have ended in the Middle East and the shepherds are looking at the end of their store of winter feed, they'd be heading back to the hills to graze their herds with the spring grass and foliage. About this time of the year, would be an acceptable time for people to make long pilgrimages and trips.



Or maybe I'm wrong, and it would have to be more towards the autumn. The roads can be pretty nasty with the spring rains. The summer heat would be gone and travel would be more convenient and again the shepherds would be in the fields.

What am I talking about? Why, the little town of Bethlehem! That's probably all I have to say, right? Now everybody knows I'm talking about the Birth of Christ---otherwise known in this world as Christ-mass. I guess everybody that has thought about the X-mass holiday celebration has pondered at one time or the other as to why the festivities take place in the dead of winter. Why do Christians observe their Saviour's birthday on December 25<sup>th</sup> when there's no possibility of His being born on that date? As we've already inferred, the shepherds would not have been in the

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## Christ Is All in All

By Hanserd Knollys  
(1598 - 1691)

The Apostle Paul, who was a chosen vessel unto the Lord, to bear His name before the Gentiles (Acts 9:15), wrote this epistle to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, which were at Colosse (Col. 1:2). And as the ensign-bearer of His glorious name, displayed the magnificence and transcendent excellencies of Christ, in the words of the text: **"Christ is all, and in all."** And that he might lift up Christ's all-sufficiency, he nullifies all other excellencies whatsoever (Col. 3:11) where he gives the Colossians to understand, that the advantage of a Jew above a Gentile, the dignity of a Scythian above a barbarian, or the immunities of a freeman above a bondsman, however esteemed among men, are nothing without Christ Who is all, and in all. These words have their dependence

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## Work, Labor, and Patience

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia

**"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father"** (I Thess. 1:2-3). These words from the apostle Paul are directed towards the church of the Thessalonians at the beginning of his first epistle to them. I want to take my text from v. 3. Today, I want us to consider these three actions that are mentioned in v. 3 -- **"work...labour...patience."**

As we consider Paul's exhortation to work, labor, and have patience, I want us to particularly notice that, in each

## The Broken Home

By Milburn Cockrell  
(1941 - 2002)

**"Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts. And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And**



**wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith**

**that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously"** (Mal. 2:11-16).

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## Sinfully Long Eyebrows

By Curtis Pugh  
of Bocsa, Romania

**"But it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off: and he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean"** (Lev. 14:9).

Nobody has become more divided than Baptists. And no Baptists have become more divided than independent fundamental Baptists, but independent, sovereign grace, landmark, missionary Baptists are making great strides toward taking away the championship from the

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***It's well that one prays for the conversion of the lost, but how much faith do you have in your prayer if you don't go and witness to them?***

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

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## Christ Is All in All

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upon the exhortation unto mortification (Col. 3:5) which exhortation the apostle presses upon the Colossians, by telling them (Col. 3:9-10) they had put off the old man, with his deeds, and put on the new man. Where (that is) in which state of regeneration, there is neither Greek, nor Jew, but **"Christ is all, and in all."** The lesson to be learned hence, is this: To wit,

### DOCTRINE: CHRIST IS ALL AND IN ALL IN THE NEW MAN

Two things need some explanation in this doctrine; viz. First, who is here meant by the new man? and secondly, how Christ is all and in all in the new man. By the new man here we are to understand (as was intended by the apostle) a true believer, or a faithful brother in Christ, one sanctified in Christ Jesus, called a saint; who is redeemed in the spirit of his mind, and has put on the new man (Eph. 4:23-24). Which is done, when by the mighty operation of the Holy Spirit, in the promises given unto us, we are made partakers of the Divine nature (II Pet. 1:3-4; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 4:6). Thus being by the Spirit and faith united with Christ, we are made a new creature, or creation (II Cor. 5:17), have a new heart (Ezek. 36:26-27) and walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4). And such may be said to have put on the new man, the sum then is this: Christ is all and in all in every believer, in every justified sanctified person, who has a new heart, and walks in newness of life.

Touching the second particular, to wit, how Christ is all and in all in the new man. The Lord Jesus Christ [Who is all in Himself, for in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9)], which was the pleasure of God in all things He might have the preeminence (Col. 1:18-19). Christ is the foundation of all (I Cor. 3:11). Fundamentally, I mean can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ; I say Christ is the foundation of all that faith, repentance, love, and other graces, gifts, and fruits of the Spirit, which are in every believer. He is a living foundation full of grace, and from His fulness have we all received grace for grace (John 1:14,16). Secondly, communicatively, I mean that Christ does communicate all unto the new man; to wit, life, light, grace, and glory. We have nothing but what we have received, and we have received all from His fulness (Eph. 4:7; John 1:16). The titles given to Christ in the Scripture of truth, will make this appear more fully, viz. that Christ is all in the new man, or in every true believer. I shall instance some.

First, Christ is our life (Col. 3:4). Christ is the life of a believer, even eternal life (I John 5:11-12). That is to say, the everlasting spiritual well-being

of a believer, is by union and communion with Jesus Christ, in Whom he lives a life of grace here, and with Whom he shall live a life of glory hereafter. Yea, all those spiritual breathings of the hunger-thirsting soul, after the enjoyment of God in any of His holy ordinances are from Christ; and from Him are all those quickening, and all that life we have in prayer, preaching, conference, and other spiritual duties. In a word, the Spirit of Life Himself, Who so sweetly refreshes the weary soul, comforts the sorrowful heart, and quickens the sanctified affections, is from Christ. And he is called the Spirit of the Son (Gal. 4:6) whom God sends forth into the hearts of His children.

Secondly, Christ is the true Light of every believer, or in the new man. That was the true Light (John 1:9) even Jesus Christ, Who enlightens the eyes of our understanding, that we may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe (Eph. 1:17-19). And though the hearts of men and women be very dark, yet God Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined into our hearts (who are believers) to give light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 4:6). And the apostle tells the sanctified Ephesians that they were sometimes darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord (Eph. 5:8). And indeed, all that heavenly knowledge, and spiritual understanding, which believers have in the mystery of the gospel, they had it from Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:2-3).

Thirdly, Christ is the Bread of Life to believers (John 6:35, 48, 51). He is the spiritual meat and drink of our souls, who believe in Him, they that eat Him shall live by Him (John 6:55, 57). All that spiritual nourishment, and soul refreshment, which believers in promises, duties, ordinances, etc. is from Christ, whose flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed, communicated by His Holy Spirit unto His people in those duties, promises, ordinances, etc. Christ is milk and wine, to be had without money (Isa. 55:1). That will quench the thirst of the new-born babes in Christ, which so much desired the sincere milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby (I Pet. 2:2-3) and that will make the mournful spirit of a doubting or backsliding believer to have a cheerful countenance, when his broken heart is cheered and warmed, yea melted and comforted with the blood of Christ his Redeemer.

Christ is the Water of Life, a pure river of living water clear as crystal, flows from this Fountain in the hearts of believers (Rev. 22:1,17; John 7:37-38; 4:10,12,14). This will satisfy the thirsty soul as Christ promised (Matt. 5:7-11). He cried: **"If**

**any man thirst, let him come to me and drink."**

Christ is the Tree of Life, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:2). Christ is said to make a feast of wine and fat things, full of marrow (Isa. 25:6), and He speaks to believers: **"Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved"** (Cant. 5:1).

I might be exceeding large in particularizing many other of His titles; as namely, Christ is a believer's justification, sanctification, and redemption (I Cor. 1:30). He is also our peace (Eph. 2:14), our Righteousness (Jer. 23:6), our Advocate with the Father (I John 2:1-2), our King, High Priest, and Prophet; our Father, Husband, Brother, our all.

Thus it may appear that Christ is all in the new man. But how is Christ all in all in the new man? I conceive, it is spoken by way of preeminence, as it is expressed (Col. 1:18-19). That is, in all which is in the new man, or in a believer, Christ ought to have the preeminence. First, as He is the Author thereof: For instance, that precious faith of God's elect, which is in the new man, is an excellent grace, but yet Christ must have the preeminence above that faith because He is the Author of it (Heb. 12:2), and so above all other graces, gifts, and fruits of the Spirit.

Secondly, as He is the preserver of all in the new man, every believer is called and sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ (Jude 1). And the believer is not only preserved in the state of grace by Christ, but the grace of God wrought in him, to wit, faith, etc. is by Christ preserved also; namely, by the intercession of Christ. **"I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not."**

Thirdly, as He is the Finisher, Who strengthens, stablishes, and perfects all in the new man. Christ is not only the Author, but the Finisher of faith (Heb. 12:2). He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, of all those graces, gifts, and fruits of the Spirit, which are in the new man (Rev. 1:8), thus Christ is all and in all in the new man. He is the Author, Preserver, and Finisher of all; He purchased all, He is the Donor of all, He is the Beauty of all, the Sum of all, the Perfection of all in the new man.

This was the good pleasure of the Father's will, that all fulness, all sufficiency, all spiritualness, should dwell in Christ, and should by Christ be communicated to His people, that in all things Christ might have the preeminence (Col. 1:18-19). And thus God will have it done to the man Christ Jesus, Whom He delighted to honor, for the service Christ did unto His Father in the redemption of His people. Therefore He gave Him a name above every name, Christ is all and in all. Which honor and dignity, Christ will at the last day prostrate at the feet

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of His Father, that God may be all in all (I Cor. 15:28). Moreover, this being the design of God, that Christ should communicate all grace, gifts, etc. unto His people. It was requisite, that all fulness should be in Christ, and so we read (John 1:14-16). Yea, the great necessity of the Lord's redeemed ones, to have a constant supply of grace, and spiritual gifts, also a continual growth of the fruits of the Spirit, requires this all sufficiency to be in Christ.

Seeing that Christ is all and in all in the new man, let us hence be instructed. First, to prize Christ highly, to set a high esteem upon Christ, to let Him have the preeminence, Who is all in all. It is that which the prophet complained of (Isa. 53:3). He, to wit Christ, was despised and rejected of men, and we esteemed Him not. We are apt to slight Christ and to disesteem Him because we discern not that beauty, excellency, riches, and glory, which is in Himself. We are ignorant of the worth of Christ, and know not our need of Him, and therefore we do not so prize Him as we ought.

First, Christ His worth, which I may hint unto you in all three particulars, to wit, 1. The unvaluable preciousness of His blood, which has in it a cleansing virtue (I John 1:7-9). **“...and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”** Thereof, we are said to be justified by His blood (Rom. 5:9). Let me ask you, who now believe, how did you esteem of this precious blood of Christ? When you were fighting out your mournful requests to God in secret corners, for one drop of Christ's blood, one dram of the grace of God, and faith of God His elect, one word of promise, one smile of a reconciled Father, or one beam of light of God's countenance, did you not prize the blood of Christ above all corruptible things, as silver, gold, honor, riches, pleasure? Did you not esteem the least drop of it more precious than all creature-comforts whatsoever, as friends, liberties, and life. Again the precious blood of Christ has a purging quality (Heb. 9:14). The blood of Christ shall purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God. Sin does both contract guiltiness and pollution, and therefore the blood of Christ does both cleanse and purge, pardon and purify, therefore we are also said to be sanctified by the blood of Christ (Heb. 13:12). **“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.”** Oh, beloved, what can be esteemed so precious to a gracious heart, as this blood of Christ which washes away all those defilements and uncleannesses which through our corruption cleaves

unto us, even in our best actions and holy duties. Such of you, (as have many times groaned in prayer to God under the feeling sense and fight of any corruption) know by experience what high esteem you have had of the blood of Christ to save you from your uncleanness.

Secondly, the unsearchable riches of His grace. **“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ”** (Eph. 3:8). Christ's riches are of such a height, depth, length, and breadth, that passes knowledge, yea thus much is spoken of the love of Christ (Eph. 3:18-19). Also faith in Christ is called precious faith. **“To them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ”** (II Pet. 1:1); yea, all the graces of Christ are the riches of the poor saints. **“Hath not God chosen the poor of this world”** (Jas. 2:5), rich in grace, etc. Tell me, beloved, how did you esteem of the riches of Christ, when you being poor in spirit, mourned for Christ and His grace, when you discerned faith, love, humility, etc. in others of the children of God, did you prize it highly in them? Did you not account them happy, rich, and blessed, whom Christ enriched with those jewels and adorned with such graces? Ah, how much more should you now prize Christ in Whom is all fullness of these unsearchable riches, and especially considering, that from His fullness you have received grace for grace (John 1:14,16).

Thirdly, the glorious liberties of His Spirit. **“...where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”** (II Cor. 3:17). Not any carnal liberty to sin and so fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:13), but spiritual liberty and freedom from sin. I mean not a perfect and total freedom from all sin, as if the people of God could never sin after conversion. For **“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”** (I John 1:8). But I mean a freedom: First, from the guilt of sin (Rom. 8:33). And the apostle says that He has **“forgiven you all trespasses”** (Col. 2:13). Secondly, from the pollution or filth of sin (Zech. 13:1). A fountain is opened to believers for sin and for uncleanness. And Ezekiel 36:25-29, God promised they shall be clean, and that He will save them from all their uncleannesses. Thirdly, from the reigning power of sin **“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace”** (Rom. 6:14). Fourthly, from the punishment due for sin, which the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13) or condemnation (Rom. 8:1) or any other satisfactory punishment.

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three wonderful attributes. Following are listed some references where these three attributes are at least alluded to: I Thess. 5:8; Titus 2:2; I Tim. 6:11; Col. 1:4-5; Gal. 5:5-6; Rom. 5:1-5.) In our text verse, we should notice that the work that the Thessalonians performed was a work **“of faith;”** and the labor that they were involved with was a labor **“of love;”** and the patience that they were commended in was a patience **“of hope.”**

### Work and Faith

The Thessalonians were commended for their work. But, as I have already mentioned, that work would not have been commended if it were not a work of faith. What I want us to establish at the beginning of this message, is the fact that any work that we do, in order for it to be pleasing in the sight of God, must be a work of faith.

I suppose that the perceived opposition that exists between works and faith is at the heart of many religious and denominational differences. However, no matter how that one side might say that works are important as a means to salvation; and no matter how that one side might say that faith alone is important in the sight of God; here, in this verse, Paul brings both faith and works into harmonious companionship. I think that works will inevitably accompany faith. We are told in Ephesians 2:8-10, **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any many should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”** Now, in these very familiar verses we are told that we are saved **“by grace... through faith.”** So we see that faith is necessary for salvation. Paul also tells us that the **“faith”** (or the **“grace,”** depending on your understanding of this verse) is the **“gift of God.”** And then Paul even goes on to make an exclusion statement, when he says, **“Not of works...”** So, if faith is necessary in salvation; and it comes by the grace of God, and without any works of men; how then, can Paul go on to say in v. 10, **“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works...”** I believe that the old axiom

would come into play here: “Works are not *unto* salvation, but rather, works are *because of* salvation.”

This is how Paul brings works and faith into harmonious agreement – by recognizing that you cannot have the one without the other. Certainly we cannot work to please God, if we do not believe (have faith) in Him. The writer to the Hebrews said, **“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him”** (Heb. 11:6). Surely works cannot be performed without faith, and just as certainly faith cannot exist without works. Remember that James tells us, **“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone”** (James 2:17). This truly is an amazing verse! And this verse goes so well with what we see in I Thess. 1:3. If there ever were a faith, that existed without works, then that faith would not be a real and genuine faith. The Lord Jesus Christ said, **“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them”** (Matt. 7:15-20). So often we consider these words of the Lord as a warning to the children of God. However, I think that it would do us good to consider these words as simply a statement of fact. You see, it is impossible for a good tree to exist without bringing forth good fruit. In like manner, it is impossible for faith to exist without works.

I also want to remind us all, in the way of exhortation, that even as Christians, we do, from time to time, bring forth works that are not of faith. And we are told in Romans 14:23, **“And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”** So, even as Christians, we must be sure to do what we do, and work the works that we do, in a faithful manner. We must demonstrate faith in God, and do our works accordingly.

Let me say this also: Notice that Paul says to the Thessalonians, **“Remembering without ceasing your work of faith...”** Now, I want to make this observation: Paul was wont to remember the work of faith that the Thessalonians had performed. And I believe that the same can be said about our God and our Saviour. Remember at the end of the text verse, Paul reminds us that we are all **“...in the sight of God and our Father.”** Isn't it wonderful to consider that all of the

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works and the self-righteous deeds that we performed before that we were saved will not be remembered? Isn't it joyous to realize that only the work of faith will be remembered, and that we will not have to give account for those things that we did before that we were saved? I tell you, it is a great comfort to me to know that I do not stand on my own work, but only on that good work of Jesus Christ, and the good works that I do as a result of the faith that was given to me in Christ Jesus my Lord.

### Labor and Love

Next, in our text verse, we find that the apostle Paul speaks to the Thessalonians concerning their **"labour of love."** Again, I want us to notice that the labor that they are recognized for is a labor **"of love."** Just as in the case of the work of faith, we find that in laboring for our Master, there is also a prerequisite – the prerequisite of love.

I suppose that in many ways, the work and the labor in this verse are very similar. However, I want to distinguish the labor from the work that we have already noticed, in this way: I believe that we can understand the work of faith to be the individual deeds and actions that we perform in our labor (service) to Jesus Christ. I see the labor of love as our whole conversation or witness or service unto Christ.

In order for a Christian to faithfully labor and serve the Lord Jesus Christ, he must exhibit love. To quote the Lord Jesus Christ again, when the lawyer asked Him what was the great commandment in the Law, the Lord said, **"...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets"** (Matt. 22:37-40). It seems to me, that what the Lord is essentially saying here is that love is the fulfillment of the law. In other words, if we love the Lord as we should, then our labor or walk of life, will be one of seeking to please the Lord. And if we love each other as we should, then our labor or manner of conversation, will be one of kindness and compassion and consideration of our fellow man. As the Apostle Paul told the Romans, **"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to**

**his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law"** (Rom. 13:8-10).

When we consider these verses, I think that it becomes clear, that in order to serve our God, and in order to labor in the cause of Christ, our labor must be a labor of love. If we don't do what we do out of love, then it appears from these Scriptures, that we are only wasting our time. A sense of duty is not enough, without love as a motivation. A sense of responsibility is not enough, without love as a motivation. A sense of fear of impending judgment is not enough, without love as a motivation. Our love of Christ, coupled with our sense of duty, knowledge of our responsibility, and our fear of God, is what is necessary if we are to properly labor for our Lord.

### Patience and Hope

Lastly, in our text verse, let's look at this thing of patience. In our text verse Paul goes on to compliment the Thessalonians on their **"patience of hope."** I think that of all of the actions or deeds or attitudes that we have looked at today, perhaps this last one is the easiest one in which we can see the connection. Surely work must begin with faith; certainly labor must be done in love; but, most obviously, and without any doubt, patience cannot exist without hope. You see, if we did not have something (or someone) to hope in, how could we possibly have patience? And, if our perseverance or patience were based on something in which we had no hope, then how long would our patience endure?

The Apostle Paul told the Romans, **"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it"** (Rom. 8:24-25). We, as Christians, are **"saved by hope."** What this means, is not that we only *hope* to be saved; but what it means is that our salvation is not immediately visible, nor immediately obtained in its fullness. But, we have a surety of hope that those promises made to us (and those promises made between God), will certainly be fulfilled. This is what it means to be **"saved by hope."**

And, since we are **"saved by hope,"** and the fullness of our salvation is not immediately recognized, then we do **"with patience wait for it."** We are not waiting for hope, but we are rather patiently waiting for that which **"we see not"** – the fullness of our salvation. So, any patience that we demonstrate in this lifetime, is only lasting, if it is a patience that is built upon this hope of eternal salvation.

As we think about the lasting patience of hope in Christ, as opposed to the temporal patience of the world that so many people today possess, I am reminded of I Peter 2:19-20, **"For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering**

**wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."** Now I know that what we have been talking about, as far as patience and hope, is not what these two verses are directly referring to. However, the point that I want to make, is that sometimes people in this life do suffer and endure; and sometimes they suffer and endure with patience. However, unless our patience is based upon a hope that is eternal, then our patience is worthless. Lots of even worldly people will exhibit some measure of patience from time to time. Their patience, though, is normally based on some strength of character or on some earthly expectation. But, our patience, just like the patience of the Thessalonians, should be a godly patience, based upon a God-given hope.

In the Lord's parable of the sower in Luke 21:4-15, the very last word that is used to refer to those that are truly saved, is the word patience. We read in Luke 21:15, **"But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."** So, here in this parable, we have works, labor, and patience all brought together. I suppose that it would be proper to say that any Christian that desires to serve the Lord properly, should desire to **"bring forth fruit with patience."** In this parable, patience is not just a by-product of bringing forth fruit, but rather **"fruit"** must be accompanied by **"patience."**

James tells us, **"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing"** (James 1:2-4). If we truly hope in Christ Jesus, then we will be required to endure, and exhibit patience. As long as the patience that we exhibit is because of our hope, love, and faith in Christ Jesus, then the patience will be well rewarded.

### Conclusion

I think that it is interesting to notice that the Lord Jesus Christ uses some similar words, like we have been studying today, when He speaks in reference to the church of Ephesus. **"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted"** (Rev. 2:1-3). The Lord Jesus Christ commended the church of

Ephesus for its work, labor, and patience. So, I believe that the church of Ephesus must have also exhibited faith, love, and hope. Faith, love, and hope are what makes our work, labor, and patience acceptable in the sight of God. The Thessalonians exhibited these qualities, and so did the church at Ephesus. So, I think that we should seek to do the same.

In conclusion, we see that in order for a child of God to properly work, labor and have patience, he must possess faith, love, and hope. However, I want us to notice one more important feature of these attributes as we see them revealed to us in our text verse. We notice that at the end of our verse, after that Paul has mentioned all of these actions, and the motivations behind them, he then goes on to say that these things must be had **"...in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father"** (I Thess. 1:3). So, if our motivations to work, labor and have patience are faith, love, and hope; then let us also remember that our faith is in Jesus Christ; our love is directed towards Him; and He is our only hope. You see, all that we have, and all that we do, and all that we hope for, is in Christ Jesus. Any faith, or any love, or any hope that is not in Him, is absolutely useless. It will not abide in this life, much less in the life to come.



## The Broken Home

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Two sins are condemned in Malachi chapter 2: The breaking of the covenant with Levi (v. 10) and the breaking of the marriage covenant (v. 14). The priesthood was involved in both sins but the common people only in the sin of breaking up their homes. The men of Judah were divorcing their Jewish wives in order to contract marriages with younger, foreign women who worshipped other gods (v. 11). This was prohibited (Deut. 7:1-3), for Israel was a set-apart nation (Ex. 19:5; Lev. 20:24-26). They were not merely joined to God by the marriage covenant, but by the Mosaic Covenant between God and Israel. A sin against a wife, a daughter of Israel, was a sin against God in the highest sense.

### THE ABUSED WIFE

The Hebrew women were suffering greatly at the hands of their husbands; wife abuse was common. In some cases their home life was being made miserable and hard to bear by husbands who were very treacherous. Others had been unjustly divorced and left to starve. These abused wives came before the Lord and covered His altar with their tears of grief (v. 13; I Sam. 1:6-7,10). So moved was the Lord with the problem of broken homes that He would no longer receive the sacrifices that their erring husbands brought into the sanctuary.

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We are not given all the details of just how the husbands were dealing treacherously with their wives (vv. 14-16). Evidently, the Hebrew husbands had dealt deceitfully in that they had promised to love and care for their wives until death, but now they had gone after other lovers. They had failed to perform their promises of the marriage covenant. Such men were traitors to their marriage vows.

Some had put their wives away (v. 16), or divorced them, but not for just cause. **"To put away"** in the case of a wife meant to divorce her (Deut. 24:1-4; Matt. 19:3-9). The reason for this divorce was not because the wife had committed adultery, but because the husband had found a younger, Gentile woman he desired. There was nothing scriptural about such a divorce (Ezra 10:10).

By such actions the husband was covering **"violence with a garment"** (v. 16). There is an allusion to the custom of putting one's garment over a woman to claim her as a wife (Ruth 3:9; Ezek. 16:8). When a man divorced his wife he filled with violence the garment that he spread over her to claim her as his wife (Deut. 22:30). The garment should have protected her (Gen. 20:16), not violated her. Such a man had cast his garment over iniquity and betrothed violence to himself for a bride.

The problem that existed in Malachi's day still exists today. There are more than one million broken homes in the USA per year. The divorce problem is growing. In America in 1920, there was one divorce for every seven marriages, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. By 1940, one divorce for every six marriages. In 1960, one divorce for every four marriages. In 1976, one divorce for every two marriages. Very soon there will be more divorces than marriages! The disintegration of marriage, the degradation of divorce and the consequent moral complications of remarriage have become a curse and a scourge to this nation!

### WORSHIP IMPOSSIBLE

My text condemns the ill treatment of a lawful wife, be it unkindness, neglect, adultery, or unscriptural divorce. Unfaithfulness to the marriage vows is condemned by the following consideration. First, religious services are marred by marital delinquencies: **"And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand"** (v. 13).

When a wife comes to church weeping of home problems worship is impossible. When a husband is out of fellowship with his wife he is also out of fellowship with

## 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

God. The Lord desires songs, not groans, in His services. For a husband to pretend in church that he has love and tenderness for his wife is to cover violence with hypocrisy (I Pet. 3:7).

### GOD A WITNESS

Second, God was a witness to every word and vow at the marriage ceremony: **"Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously"** (v. 14). The Lord was present at the solemn contract and saw the obligations the parties agreed to (Gen. 31:49-50). He who first instituted matrimony (Gen. 2:24) was a witness to the contract and gave it His sanction. The Lord Himself joined them together. This verse teaches marriage was a covenant of God (Prov. 2:17). It was made in the presence of God, and He was a witness to the marriage.

In the passage before us a legal divorce had taken place and another marriage had been legally consummated. The Hebrew wife had been divorced for no reason except her husband had found a young, Gentile, idol-worshipper he liked better. Jehovah did not recognize such a divorce, for it was not a scriptural divorce. The Lord viewed the man as still married to his Hebrew wife. The marriage covenant had not been broken by such a divorce and a subsequent remarriage. The Hebrew woman was still looked upon as the man's wife.

Neither God nor His moral law about marriage have changed. He is still a witness to every word and vow at the marriage ceremony. He watches over the years and notes how these promises are kept. God is a witness to every act of wrong on the part of either the husband or wife. He is **"the avenger of all such"** (I Thess. 4:6) who fail to perform their marriage vows.

### TENDER RELATIONS CRUELLY VIOLATED

Third, the tender relations of marriage are cruelly violated when a man divorces his wife (v. 16). First, this sin is committed against his **"wife"** (vv. 14-15). She is bone of his bone, the nearest to him of all the relations he has in this world. He is obligated to cleave to her and not leave her for another.

Second, this sin was committed by the husband **"against the wife of his youth"** (vv. 14-15; cf. Prov. 5:18; Isa. 54:6). The Jews married very young, the husband

being but thirteen years of age and the wife sometimes younger. She was her husband's first choice when his affections were pure and fresh, and to whom his love was strong and simple. She is the woman he has lived with for many years upon this earth.

Third, the woman wronged was his **"companion"** (v. 14), not a slave nor an inferior. She had been so in times past and ought to be so still. A wife is a part of one's self; she is one flesh with him; she is to be his helpmeet. For many years she has shared his hopes, fears, griefs, and joys. The husband should delight in her company more than in any other person. Love-companionship is the highest ideal of matrimony.

Fourth, the woman abused was **"the wife of"** his **"covenant"** (v. 14). She was the wife the husband had pledged before God to love and cherish. The husband was still obligated to perform what he promised (Ruth 4:11-12; Prov. 2:17). To violate the marriage covenant was a monstrous crime in the sight of God; yea, an abomination!

### GOD'S DESIGN IN MARRIAGE

Fourth, divorce is wrong because it is fatal to God's original design for marriage: **"And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed"** (v. 15). Malachi, like Jesus Christ (Matt. 19:4-6), took the people of his day back to the original institution of marriage in Eden. God joined one man to one woman to show the oneness of marriage. Adam could be married to no other save Eve since no other had been created by God. Eve could not marry any other man than Adam since there was no other in the world. God intended that one man and one woman should be joined together for life. Divorce was not a part of God's original plan for marriage.

What about the words: **"Yet had he the residue of the spirit"**? The Spirit is the Holy Spirit Who had a part in creation (Gen. 2:7; Job 33:4). God could have had the Spirit to create any number of wives for Adam, if He had pleased to do so. But in order to designate the unity of marriage God created but one woman for Adam.

### DIVORCE FATAL TO GODLY CHILDREN

Fifth, divorce is wrong because it is fatal to bringing up godly children. One of the reasons given why the husband

and wife should continue together is that they **"might seek a godly seed"** (v. 15). This means a seed worthy of God, a legitimate offspring born in true and lawful wedlock (I Cor. 7:14). One great end of the institution of marriage is to train up a godly posterity. This is best done by the joint care of both parents, living together in love and uniting in their instructions, examples, and prayers for that end. Divorce is not conducive to rearing godly children because they spring from a union which does not take God's marriage covenant seriously.

It is a known fact that divorce impairs a child's happiness and character, for God designed that each child should have a father and mother. Delinquent children usually come from broken homes. Children need the security, the love, the peace, and contentment that go with a holy and happy home. Divorce is fatal to godly family life and training.

### INFECTIOUS INFLUENCE

Sixth, unscriptural divorce is wrong because it may have an infectious influence on others. If a husband deals treacherously against his wife, he is tempting another man to do the same thing to his wife (v. 10). This is applicable to the influence that a man may exert over others. His example may tempt another husband to mistreat his wife, or an unmarried man to mistreat his girl friend. The master and the scholar, the blind leader of the blind, shall both fall into the same sin (v. 12).

Our generation has witnessed many broken homes. The children of these broken homes have repeated the sin of their parents. There is such an awful break down in the home in America that divorce and shacking-up together is the order of the day. Preachers and politicians do it. Young people reason that if such people do it then it must be okay. Adultery and fornication are so common that some women do not even know who the fathers of their children really are. Base-born children are left with the grandparents or the state. Millions of children are growing up without a proper home and never knowing parental love and affection. This is destined to bring down our great nation and our churches.

### GOD HATES DIVORCE

Seventh, another reason for a man not to divorce the wife of his youth is that God hates divorce: **"For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away"** (v. 16). The Amplified Bible renders it: "For the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I hate divorce and marital separation." Berkeley has it: "For I hate divorce, says the LORD the God of Israel."

Liberals cannot endure these plain words. Every known trick is pulled to "water down" the plain language here. The Latin Vulgate (a Catholic version) is brought forth which reads: "When

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thou shalt hate her put her away, saith the Lord the God of Israel." The Targum and the Septuagint versions have it this way also, they point out. This is done in order to give a man a license to put away his wife for every cause.

The liberal translation will not stand the test. First, the KJV is right in its rendering of the Hebrew. Most other versions agree with the rendering of the common version. Second, the liberal rendering would encourage divorce for almost every reason, whereas in the context divorce is strongly condemned. Third, such a meaning cannot be reconciled with the next expression: **"For one covereth violence with his a garment."** The prophet is speaking of a violent act, and that violent act is the unjust putting away of a wife. Fourth, the liberal rendering agrees with no other Scriptures. No other passage says that the hatred of a wife is grounds for divorce. The liberal twist of the passage grew out of Jewish tradition by which the scribes rendered the commandment of God of none effect. Fifth, the context must be ignored and the Hebrew words in verse 16 entirely altered to make it capable of the liberal sense.

The words about God hating divorce must not be pressed too far. They concern unscriptural divorce. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 allowed divorce in the case of adultery on the part of the wife. Christ agreed with Moses on this (Matt. 19:7-9). Nor should this statement be pressed to the degree that one assumes that God hates all divorced people. The passage merely teaches that God hates all unscriptural divorces. The reason that God hates such is because sin is what broke up the home in this context, and God hates all sin (Deut. 12:31; 16:22; Prov. 6:16-19; Isa. 1:14; 61:8; Jer. 44:4; Amos 5:21).

## CONCLUSION

1. Marriage is an institution of God, and it accords with the dictates of nature and the law of Divine inspiration. The ideal marriage is a relationship established by mutual agreement until death. The wife of a man's youth should be his wife in old age. **"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder,"** said Jesus Christ (Matt. 19:6).

2. The husband who beats and batters his wife cannot cloak his violent behavior by attending religious services with his family. Violation of the marriage covenant by adultery, or any form of conjugal unfaithfulness, is not made right by paying a tithe to the church. God sees the tears of the injured wife and will call such a husband to account for his conduct.

3. Contrary to the teaching of religious liberals, Malachi 2 teaches that there is such a thing as an unscriptural divorce.

If a husband divorces his wife without scriptural grounds and marries another woman God does not recognize this unscriptural marriage. In God's sight the man is still married to the wife of his youth and the marriage covenant with his first wife is still binding. The idea taught by liberals that the mere sexual intercourse with this second woman breaks the marriage bond with the first wife cannot be reconciled with the teaching of Malachi 2. There is, in fact, no way to make this second marriage in the case in the context of Malachi 2 scriptural. An unscriptural marriage can never be made scriptural.

4. Woe to the husband who divorces the wife of his youth for another woman he likes better. This is a violent treatment of the wife of his marriage covenant to which God was a witness. God hates such sinful actions. Legal divorce may take place and another marriage be legally consummated, but God will never recognize such a marriage. The sexual acts of this second marriage will always be adulterous. Jesus Christ said: **"Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery"** (Mark 10:11-12).

5. Verse 16 contains a warning that men had better take seriously: **"Therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously."** When one feels the desire to seek a divorce from the wife of his youth he had better take heed to his spirit, for in the spirit is often where sin begins (II Cor. 7:1). He must deal with whatever is producing this wrong spirit. To fail to do this may cause him to pursue a divorce and perhaps enter into a relationship with another woman.

6. Hollywood and religious liberals may make fun of such a thing as an unscriptural divorce. They may promote and perform the Murphy Brown life style. They can deride those who believe in Bible morality in the press and the media. None of this will change the fact that unscriptural divorces and all forms of marital infidelity are abhorrent to God. Such individuals may laugh their way into Hell, but they cannot laugh their way out of Hell (Rev. 21:8)!



# This Time of Year

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hills and Caesar Augustus would never have made such a proclamation to travel to your hometowns to be taxed in the worst weather of the year!

So why observe Christ-mass in December? I guess if you've pondered the holiday's origins much, you know the answer to that, too. I'm not going to get into a long protracted monologue

detailing the Catholic origins of this holiday. Fine for you, if you're a Catholic, to celebrate Christ-mass to go along with all of your other false traditions of men. This article is not primarily for you. What you need is the other fine articles the *Banner* puts out each November/December to prove that the celebration is a Catholic veneer over pagan traditions and worship ceremonies. Can't put Christ back into an observance He was never in, in the first place... **"But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?"** (Matt. 15:3).

No, this article is for saved Christians that are sincere in their worship of almighty God. Those who have for years been mourning the commercialization of their Saviour's birth. The ones who denounce ol' Santa Claus and Jolly Saint Nick as lies. The ones who... well, I can't really think of any other part of the pagan traditions they've done away with! The green tree still remains in most houses and many churches. Gift-exchanging could NEVER be given up, could it? The kiddies are expecting so much! All the Nativity scenes and the bright lights are still a necessity to the celebration.

Okay, okay! I've gotten off track again. What I'd like to point out is what several sincere (I hope!) Christian observers have agreed with me about the lies of X-mass. We've discussed the error of the time of the celebration and the worldly love of the customs and come to the conclusion together, that this time of the year would be a 'better' time to observe the holiday. **"Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen"** (I John 5:21). A lot of lies could be taken care of, if sincere *Baptists* would separate themselves from the Catholic monstrosity and just go off to another point in the calendar and draw off to their own churches and families to celebrate the birth of their Saviour! They could do away with the 'Three wise men' kneeling at the manger- they weren't in the barn with the swaddling babe! **"And when they (wise men) were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him"** (Matt. 2:11). No problem with Santa Claus, either, when you leave winter behind! All of the world would ridicule them as intolerant Baptists and meticulous and narrow-minded Christians. Party-poopers and dogmatists they'd be branded, but that'd be all to the good wouldn't it? **"...for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God"** (Luke 16:15).

Okay! I can feel some enthusiasm already! Let's do it! Let's separate from all of the evils of the X-mass celebration all around the world and have our own private Baptist observance *this time of year* and leave all the lies behind once and for all! After all, if we start it, we can control it, can't we? We can say for

instance- No Baal bushes (evergreen tree worship- I Kings 14:22-23, **"And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD...under every green tree."**)! No Yule logs, no stocking stuffers with gifts or ashes, no holly, no mistletoe, etc. We could completely confine the celebration to a strict observance of Biblical Truth concerning the birth of our LORD! We could make our family gatherings more spiritual and uplifting, instead of being embarrassed whenever the children would innocently question one of the pagan or Romish customs observed on December 25<sup>th</sup>. YES! *Great Idea!*

Can we do it? Do we have enough backbone to throw all the evil away? Hmm... Why is there no great zeal and passion rising in your hearts? Surely there is a desire to glorify the LORD? To exonerate His Precious Name? Take away the Shame of mixing paganism and catholicism with our worship services and devotions? Can't we do this? I mean, I was watching the History Channel, and it would have been a lot better if our English and American forefathers of the middle nineteenth century would have chosen a different time of year, so we could have a hundred and sixty-five year tradition going this time of year. Yep, that would have made it a lot easier. If we were lucky, it still wouldn't be on the world's calendar, yet, except as an asterisk. After all the Greek Orthodox guys did it and *they* have their exclusive Christ-mass celebration on a different date in January! But when America started celebrating this 'time-honored' and 'aged' tradition in the 1850's, they were too short-sighted and chose to celebrate along with the Catholics, instead of honoring the truth of the 'History Channel' (*for once!*).

I hope that I haven't piqued your interest too much in moving the celebration of the Saviour. Because, as you know deep down in your heart, it wouldn't work, would it? X-mass is too steeped in tradition. 'Dreaming of a white Christ-mass,' Jesus being the Reason for the Season, family heirlooms perched on top of the brightly decorated trees, family gatherings and family memories, heart-touching stories of gifts from the heart, stories of great sacrifice at this time of year to give certain needy children a taste of what Christ-mass really is. You know what? A mere mortal can't let it go! One can see the lies and bemoan them. One can perceive the idolatry and paganism, yet squeeze their eyes closed. One can fall down on their knees and ask God to purify the *honest desire* to worship His Holy Birth, but as Job said long ago, **"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one."** (Job 14:4).

We can't do it, Honest Reader. I know the sincere desire is there to worship God, but it's no use, **"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their**

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**heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men**" (Matt. 15:8-9). The roots go too far back! You see how quickly, even in just 165 years something can ingrain itself into a whole country's sense of right and wrong? We simply can't in good conscience celebrate Christ-mass in December or in April, June or October. We can't rename it and start afresh either! We can't put Christ back into something that we have to honestly state He was NEVER IN...!

The best answer I've ever heard about why we Baptists don't celebrate X-mass is- "My LORD hath not told me to do so." There is no **"Thus saith the LORD"** for this observance. And if you can't go to Scripture to back up your assertions, Christian BEWARE! **"But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain"** (Gal. 4:9-11).

Interestingly enough, however, X-mass *is in the Bible!* Let the eyebrows rise! Unfortunately for modern Christians, they aren't very helpful references---at least for the perpetuation of this vile holiday of perfidy. Let's start our Scripture reading with Jeremiah 10:1-5, **"Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good."**

Sound familiar? Can't you see this scene from recent memory? Grandpa and Dad tromping off into the forest to find the perfect tree. Cut it out and drag it back to the house. Put some cross-ties under it and fasten it upright with nails and hammers in a place of honor and prestige. Deck it with silver and gold. Top it off with the star of Bethlehem and cover the unsightly cross-ties with brightly decorated gifts and presents.

Eh, what's that? You say this couldn't be an X-mass celebration- can't be an X-mass tree, because its a thousand years before Christ's birth? Oh, how easy it is for man to limit an Eternal, Omniscient

God in His need! Don't you think God *knew* the Future? Okay, let's take this a step at a time. If you noticed the above similarities in the actions of the Babylonians and apostate Israelites and modern day celebrations, we must make a defense of these seemingly un-Christ-like actions.

First of all, I know that you do not want to worship the tree. In Jeremiah 10, that was the primary focal point of the tree. It was a laughable god, an idol, even. The foolish heathen thought they could worship an unspeaking, immobile tree and the god would reward them with good fortune and blessings. That's not what modern Christians are doing! They are worshipping the God of the tree! Well, maybe this is not such a good argument, because actually that is what the heathen are doing, too. The idol stands for their god as well... Hmm...

I hope for your sake that you're praying as you read this. For if you are, the Holy Ghost will *surely* be convicting you. I certainly do not want to be irreverent here, but how can you not wonder about God starting up a nice tradition celebrating His Son's birth and not being original enough to have His own customs and garnishes? To have to steal them from Satan's followers and heathen practices! Selah. Think about it. At least the Catholics have the guts to acknowledge that they've done this in the history books.

Well, what about the gift-giving? Did you know that's in the Scriptures, as well? Just turn to Revelation 11:7-10, where it speaks about God's two faithful witnesses, **"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth."**

Again, you might argue that there is no mention of the word X-mass or any equivalent. Do you really have any problem seeing the merry-makers passing their glittering gifts to one another that they've saved up all year to get? I see it every winter, and I fully expect the two prophets to die on December 24<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup>. The gifts are already at hand, the merriment is cranked up and all that stops a really good celebration are these two strait-laced (Baptist) prophets preaching the Gospel Truth and telling

the world that their Holy Day is a pack of lies! When the beast is allowed to kill them, the World will go wild with celebration. Fortunately, you and I will not be there, having been raptured out a few years earlier, but imagine the horror of watching the crowds observing a so-called holy day with such rapacity and bloodthirsty vigor. I would hope again for the pricking of a conscience at this certain evidence in the Bible of an X-mass celebration, but even that won't happen unless you are truly *praying* to God to show you the Truth.

I guess that I might be confused a little. I mean, I was fortunate enough to be blessed by God in that I grew up in a house that already abstained from these pagan celebrations. Did I ever miss the feel-good echoes that resonate throughout Christendom during the Holiday Season? Fleshly speaking, I must admit that it was very difficult for me a few times. All of your friends are talking about gifts. All the heart-warming stories are there of heroic sacrifices and magnanimous choices made by godly saints. People love this holiday and exalt it to the highest level. It has risen in most American Christian lives as the penultimate event of the year... but I inwardly tremble... **"A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?"** (Jer. 5:30-31).

Can you really give it up? Is there not a desire to do so? Have you lost all sense of spiritual direction where this one thing is concerned? How long will the Holy Spirit prick your dull conscience? Do you want Him to stop? Don't you realize how dangerous it is? For yourself, yes, but particularly for your children and theirs, **"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book"** (Rev. 22:18). Your family will grow up in total ignorance of the pagan and Catholic origins of X-mass and innocently copy and add to their worship services everything that you do during this season.

The offerings of Nadab and Abihu weren't anything extraordinary from other activities of that special day, but they were something that was 'added.' They were something that the 'LORD had not commanded.' **"And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces."** (This was surely wondrous

and exhilarating and filled every one with the Spirit of Worship!) **And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace."** (Lev. 9:23-10:3).

God's worship is so supreme, that Aaron and the remaining sons were not allowed to mourn or do anything to distract from the most important acts in the Universe this day---GOD's Worship Service! Leviticus 10:6-7- **"And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled. And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses."** Can you really and honestly make a difference in what Nadab and Abihu did and the modern adaptations of the X-mass celebration that have become pivotal and supreme in most, even Baptist churches today? Has the emphasis of our worship been directed else from where God, Himself commanded us? Can we do that lightly, as Nadab and Abihu did? They certainly meant no dishonor to God in their hearts or actions. They just got caught up in the excitement of that day. 'Fire from Heaven! Glory to God! Hey, look what else we can do! Fire in our censers! Glory to God!'

Huh-uh, only worship God in the way He has commanded. I'm deadly serious here now. If you don't have a "Thus saith the LORD," then please don't do it. It's hazardous, very hazardous. None of the Ten Commandments specifically ruled out what Aaron's sons were about to do in the joyous exhilaration of the moment as wrong or incorrect---other than that *God already had a worship plan---*a church bulletin if you please---already filled out. And it oozes with glory unto God. We can't make it better. Mere mortals? Improve upon God?

I want to leave you with a couple of Scriptures that are very pertinent and meaningful. They have jarred me and stopped me in my tracks on several occasions. Their relevance to this holiday celebration is stunning! Read closely. I have underscored and highlighted a few phrases, but the sum total of these twenty verses will puncture the soul of

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the season. Isaiah 1:10-20, "Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, (X-mass?) who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations (unasked offerings!); incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. (You can't make your X-mass worship serious enough or acceptable enough!) "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." (Now the exhortation to us) "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword (spiritual or physical?): for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

Ezekiel 22:23-31, "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, (America) nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of (not necessarily of men, but of Satan through) her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravaging the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravaging the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar (there is NO "Thus Saith the LORD!"), seeing vanity, and divining lies (Lies,

lies!) unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken (My LORD hath not told me to do it...!). The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. (Here's your chance!) And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none (Oh, our poor, sorrowful country of America...). Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD."

America's only hope and your only course of action is to return to the LORD's Word and perfect will. May the LORD bless these sincere pleadings to your heart. May it be *prayingly* humble and submissive to His will for your life, as I pray that mine will be also.



## Priestly Sympathies of Christ

By Wendell P. Furlong  
of Burnside, Kentucky

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly



unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:15-16).

According to these verses, the priesthood of Christ is based upon the perfection of His humanity. Because tempted in all points like as we are, therefore He can show mercy, and grant help. Whatever destroys the conception of His humanity does in that same degree overthrow the notion of His priesthood.

The perfection of Christ's humanity implies He was possessed of a human soul as well as a human body. There was a view held in early times, and condemned by the church as a heresy, according to which the body of Christ was an external framework animated by Deity, as our bodies are animated by our souls, what the soul is to us, Deity was to Christ. His body was flesh, blood, and bones--moved, guided, ruled by indwelling

Divinity.

But you perceive at once that this destroys the notion of complete humanity. It is not this tabernacle of material elements which constitutes our humanity; you can not take that pale corpse from which life has fled, and call that man. And if Deity were to take up that form and make it is abode that would not be a union of the Divine and Human. It would only be the union of Deity with certain materials that might have passed into man, or into an animal or an herb. Humanity implies a body and a soul.

Accordingly, in the life of Christ we find two distinct classes of feeling. When He hungered in the wilderness--when He thirsted on the cross--when He was weary at the well at Sychar--He experienced sensations which belong to the bodily department of human nature. But when out of twelve He selected one to be His bosom friend--when He looked round upon the crowd in anger--when the tears streamed down His cheeks at Bethany--and when He recoiled from the thought of approaching dissolution: these--grief, friendship, and fear--were not the sensations of the body, much less were they the attributes of Godhead. They were the affections of an acutely sensitive human soul, alive to all the tenderness, and hopes, and anguish with which human life is filled, qualifying Him to be tempted in all points like as we are.

The second thought which presents itself is that the Redeemer not only was, but is man. He was tempted in all points like us. He is as a high-priest which can be touched. Our conceptions on this subject, from being vague, are often very erroneous. It is fancied that in the history of Jesus' existence, once for a limited period and for definite purposes, He took part in frail humanity; but that when that purpose was accomplished, the man forever perished, and the Spirit reascended, to unity again with pure unmixed Deity. But Scripture has taken peculiar pains to give assurance of the continuance of His humanity. It has carefully recorded His resurrection. After that He passed through space from spot to spot: when He was in one place He was not in another. His body was sustained by the ordinary aliments--broiled fish and honeycomb. The prints of suffering were on Him. His recognitions were human still. Thomas and Peter were especially reminded of incidents before His death, and connected with His living interests. To Thomas He says--"Reach hither thy hand." To Peter--"Lovest thou me?"

And this typifies to us a very grand and important truth. It is this, if I may venture so to ex-human the heart of God. We think of God as a Spirit, infinitely removed from and unlike the creatures He has made. But the truth is, man resembles God: all Spirits, all minds, are of the same family. The Father bears a

likeness to the Son whom He has created. The mind of God is similar to the mind of man. Love does not mean one thing in man, and another thing in God. Holiness, justice, pity, and tenderness--these are in the Eternal the same in kind which they are in the finite being. The present manhood of Christ conveys this deeply important truth, that the Divine heart is human, it sympathizes.

The third observance upon these verses is that there is a connection between what Jesus was and what Jesus is. He can be touched now, because He was tempted then. The incidents and the feelings of that part of the existence which is gone have not passed away without results which are deeply entwined with his present being. His past experience has left certain affects durable in His nature as it is now. It has endured him with certain qualifications and certain susceptibilities, which He would not have had but for that experience. Just as the results remained upon His body, the prints of the nails in His palms, and the spear-gash in his side, so do the results remain upon His soul, enduring Him with certain susceptibilities, for "**He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities**" with certain qualifications, for "**He is able to show mercy, and to impart grace to help in time of need.**"

To turn now to the subject itself. It has two branches.

I. The Redeemer's preparation for His priesthood.

II. The Redeemer's priestly qualifications.

His preparation: The preparation consisted in being tempted. But here a difficulty arises. Temptation, as applied to a being perfectly free from tendencies to evil, is not easy to understand. See what the difficulty is. Temptation has two senses: It means test as probation; it means also trial, involving the idea of pain or danger. A common acid applied to gold tests it, but there is no risk or danger to the most delicate golden ornament. There is one acid, and only one, which tries it, as well as tests it. The same acid applied to a shell endangers the delicacy of its surface. A weight hanging from a bar of iron only tests its strength; the same, suspending from a human arm, is a trial, involving, it may be, the risk of pain or fracture. No trial placed before a sinless being is intelligible enough in the sense of probation--it is a test of excellence; but it is not easy to see how it can be a temptation in the sense of pain, there be no inclination to do wrong.

However, Scripture plainly asserts this as the character of Christ's temptation. Not merely test but trial.

First, you have passages declaring the immaculate nature of His mind--as here, "**without sin.**" Again, He was "**holy harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners**" (Heb. 7:26). And again,

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**“The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me”** (John 14:30). The Spirit of evil found nothing which it could claim as its own in Christ. It was the meeting of two elements which will not amalgamate---oil and water could as easily bind, as the mind of Christ with evil, as a mustard seed with a pumpkin seed. Temptation glances from His heart as the steel point does from the surface of the diamond. It was not that evil propensities were kept under the power of the Spirit in Him---He had no evil propensities at all. Obedience was natural to Him.

But then we find another class of passages such as this: **“He suffered, being tempted.”** Those were not mere tests in the temptation, but there was also painfulness in the victory. How could this be without any tendency to evil?

The answer is this, let us analyze sin. In every act of sin there are two steps: There is the rising of a desire which is natural, and, being natural is not wrong: there is the indulgence of that desire in forbidden circumstances; and that is sin. Let injury, for example, be inflicted, and resentment will arise. It must arise spontaneously. It is as impossible for injustice to be done, and resentment not to follow intense torture. Resentment is but the sense of injustice, made more vivid by its being brought home to ourselves; resentment is beyond our control, so far. There is not sin in this; but let resentment pass into, not justice but revenge; let it smolder in vindictive feeling until it becomes retaliation, and then a natural feeling has grown into a transgression. You have the distinction between these two things clearly masked in Scripture. **“Be ye angry”**---here is the allowance of the human, **“and sin not”**---here is the point where resentment passes into retaliation.

Again, take the natural sensation of hunger. Let a man have been without food; let the gratification present itself, and the natural desire will arise involuntarily. It will arise just as certainly in a forbidden as in a permitted circumstance. It will arise whether what he looks on be the bread of another or his own. And it is not here, in the sensation of hunger that the guilt lies. But it lies in the willful gratification of it after it is known to be forbidden.

This was literally one of the cases in which Christ was tried. The wish for food was in His nature in the wilderness. The very mode of gratifying it was presented to His imagination, by using Divine power in an unlawful way. And had He so been constituted that the lower wish was superior to the higher will, there would have been an act of sin; had the two been nearly balanced, so that the conflict hanged in doubt, as there was an inner struggle, there would

have been a tendency to sin: what we call a sinful nature. But it was in the entire and perfect subjugation of desire to the will of right that a sinless nature was exhibited.

Here then is the nature of sin---sin is not the possession of desires, but the having them in uncontrolled ascendancy over the higher nature. Sinfulness does not consist in having strong desires or passions; in the strongest and highest natures, all, including the desires, is strong. Sin is not a real thing. It is rather the absence of a something, the will to do right. It is not a disease or taint, an actual substance projected into the constitution. It is the absence of the spirit which orders and harmonizes the whole; so that what we mean when we say the natural man must sin inevitably, is this, that he has strong natural appetites, and that he has no bias from above to counteract these appetites: exactly as if a ship were deserted by the crew, and left on the bosom of the Atlantic with every sail set and the wind blowing. No one forces her to destruction, yet on the rocks she will surely go, just because there is no pilot at the helm. Such is the state of ordinary men. Temptation leads to a fall. The gusts of instincts, which rightly guided would have carried safely into port, dash them on the rocks. No one forces them to sin; but the spirit---pilot has left the helm---(Fallen Nature.) Sin, therefore, is not in the appetites, but in the absence of that which controls the will.

Now contrast this state with the state of Christ. There were in Him all the natural appetites of mind and body. Relaxation and friendship were dear to Him---so were sunlight and life. Hunger, pain, death,---He could feel all, the shrank from them. Conceive, then, a case in which the gratification of any one of these inclinations was inconsistent with His Father's will. At one moment it was unlawful to eat, though hungry; and without one tendency to disobey, did fasting cease to be severe? It was demanded that he should endure anguish; and willingly as He suffered Himself, did pain cease to be pain? Could the Spirit of obedience reverse every feeling in human nature? When the brave man gives his shattered arm to the surgeon's knife, will may prevent even the quiver of an eyelid, but no will and no courage can reverse his sensation from inflicting pain. When the heart is raw, and smarting from recent bereavement, let there be the deepest and most reverential submission to the highest will, is it possible not to wince? Can any count demand for submission extort the profession that pain is pleasure?

It seems to have been in this way that the temptation of Christ caused suffering. He suffered from the force of desire. Though there was no hesitation whether to obey nor not, no strife in the will, in the act of mastery there was pain. There was

self-denial---there was obedience at the expense of tortured natural feeling. He shrank from Peter's suggestion of escape from ignoring as from a thing which did not shake His determination, but made Him feel, in the idea of bright life, vividly the cast of his resolve. **“Get thee behind me, tempter, for “thou art an offense.”** In the garden, unswervingly, **“not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”** There was no reluctance in the will. But was there any struggling---any shudder in the inward sensations---any remembrance that the cross was sharp---any recollection of the family at Bethany, and the pleasant walk, and the dear companionship which He was about to leave? **“My soul is exceeding sorrowful to die.”**

So that in every one of those cases---not by the reluctance of a sinful sensation, but by the quivering and the anguish of natural feeling when it is trampled upon by lofty will---Jesus suffered, being tempted. **“He was tempted like as we are.”** Remember this. For the way in which some speak of the sinlessness of Jesus reduces all His suffering to physical pain, destroys the reality of temptation, reduces that glorious heart to a pretense, and converts that whole of His history into a mere fictitious drama, in which scenes of trial were only represented, not really felt. Remember that, **“in all points,”** the Redeemer's soul was tempted.

It is a fact Jesus was not like the first Adam, that was a mere mortal, who could and did sin. Any individual who cannot see and understand man's totally---despaired nature, experimentally, will go wrong on man's other teachings of God's Word. That is a settled fact; there is no question about that. You learn it, first, from the study of God's Word, and second, experimentally under Holy Spirit convictions. You read in your Bible that **“men loved darkness rather than light”** (John 3:19).

The reason some people lie, plot, plan, steal and adulterize is because no restraining power is in their life that enables them to just say, **“NO”** to their greed, thirst, lust for power, control, and world preeminence. However, **“they shall reap what they sow”** (Gal. 6:7-8). They have and do offend God's little ones, and heap it on their lusts (Luke 17:2).

Conclusion:

The Lord has always had a way to bring order out of disorder (Gen. 1:2).

The Lord delivered Joseph from Pontiphar's wife, who, filled with lust, tried in vain to seduce Joseph (Gen. 39:12).

Jezebel conspired against Naboth to get his vineyard by recruiting baser sort of men (I Kings 21:10).

The wicked Jews of Paul's day used the lewd and baser sort to attack Paul and Silas (Acts 17:5).

No one can say a Houdini was so skilled in seduction that he caused me to sin and commit adultery, and has caused

me to become censorious to others. Back in the farming country where I was born and reared, I have seen this. A farmer would have a good stock dog. The neighbor would have a sheep killer. Together they roamed the country and both dogs became sheep killers. The old farmer destroyed both dogs. He remarked that it was in them, and the same penalty applied.

Lastly, it is the same human sympathy which qualifies Christ for judgment. It is written that the Father hath committed all judgment to Him, because He is the son of man. The sympathy of Christ extends to the frailties of human nature, not to its hardened guilt: He is **“touched with the feelings of our infirmities.”** There is nothing in His bosom which can harmonize with malice; He cannot feel for envy; He had no fellow-feeling for cruelty, oppression, hypocrisy, bitter censorious judgments. Remember He could look around about Himself with anger. The sympathy of Christ is a very comforting subject. It is, besides, a tremendous subject; for on sympathy the awards of Heaven and Hell are determined. **“Except a man be born again”**---not *he shall not*, but---“he can not enter into heaven.” There is nothing in Him which has affinity to any thing in the bosom of the judge. A sympathy for that which is pure implies a repulsion of that which is impure. Hatred of evil is in proportion to the strength of love for good. To love good intensely and consistently is to hate evil intensely and consistently. It was in strict accordance with the laws of sympathy that He blighted Pharisaism in Matthew 23. He will say to hypocrites, **“depart from me! I never knew you”** (Matt. 7:21-23).



## My Yoke Is Easy-- My Burden Is ight

By Rosco Brong  
(1908 - 1985)

**“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light”** (Matt. 11:29-30).



The invitation and assurance given in these verses are for those who have accepted the invitation of verse 28. In verse 28 Jesus invites lost souls to come to Him, that is, to believe in Him, for salvation, or to obtain the rest described

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# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

What doctrines must a church believe and practice to be a "sound Baptist Church? – Kentucky

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This question might well be answered differently by various people. I will give my convictions.

Firstly, a church is not one of the Lord's churches unless it is properly organized by another existing church which was properly organized. This is the way missionary work was done in the New Testament. This is a foundational principle of church truth.

For a church to be sound doctrinally, it must be right on ALL doctrines. This is what sound means. Sound means correct. Therefore, to be correct, a church must believe the Scripture. This means everything from Genesis to Revelation. Most importantly, this includes the Gospel of Jesus Christ which is the subject of the Bible. I believe a person can be wrong on many doctrines and be saved, but, they cannot be wrong on the Gospel and be saved. If you are an unbeliever in the Gospel of Christ, you are wrong.

To be correct, a church must believe in the local church only. A church must believe the truth concerning the ordinances. A church must believe in the doctrines of grace. A church must believe the truth concerning Biblical prophecy. A church must believe in Biblical missions. This list could grow long if the question is what must a church to believe to be "sound."

As far as fellowship is concerned, we can have fellowship with churches who aren't necessarily 100 % correct on all things. In some cases, this must be a very limited fellowship. In other cases, fellowship can be quite sweet. For instance, our church has never made the head-covering a test of fellowship. I believe a woman should wear a covering in the worship service. An OPEN MINDED, in depth study of I Corinthians 11 will bring a person to this truth. However, we have always felt that this doctrine shouldn't divide us. We know of many churches that have fellowship even though they have differences on things such as home-schooling or women wearing pants. These issues have never been divisive in most churches, except by those who make them that way. Still yet, if somebody is wrong on the subject of

baptism, we believe this is much too major of a doctrine to fellowship with this person on. Other foundational doctrines could be mentioned.

I know this answer is not fully definitive, but, this is something that must be considered in each case. Some people who have confrontational attitudes might very well embarrass or mislead a church by preaching something. Others have respect for the pulpit of another. I simply give these statements as guidelines.

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I am not qualified to list the doctrines of a "sound Baptist Church" and I believe that no one else is either, although many try. The Holy Spirit has already done that, and has a few things to say about what makes a Church to be sound in the faith.

Matthew 16:18 first of all determines that a Church must be one of His Churches to even have any hope of being sound. The promise that the gates of hell will not prevail against the Lord's Church is of great comfort to Baptists since there is a great deal of history establishing the Baptists as being the ones with the greater antiquity. That being the case, the link succession of the Lord's Churches (Church establishing Church) is certainly a truth of God's Holy Word to be upheld by sound Baptist Churches.

There are many distinguishing marks of a sound Baptist Church. These marks are found in God's Word. God's Word is what sets the Lord's Churches apart from all others **"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth"** (John 17:17). A sound Baptist Church must obey Christ, Her head. Christ has set down commands that His Church must obey to be sound. **"If ye love me, keep my commandments"** (John 14:15).

The Holy Bible is what we must look to, to find out a sound Baptist Church. Man's opinion is just that, man's opinion. God's revealed will concerning the Lord's Church is the only tool to be used to determine soundness. A Bible believing, God honoring, God fearing, Christ obeying, Holy Spirit following Church will nine times out of ten be sound. Man's standard for soundness will always be

inferior and self serving.

God's Word is the standard, and His standard is supremely high.

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This question is really too vague and general for me to answer in a Forum question. The answer could actually turn into an entire confession of faith. Jude 3 declares: **"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."** The "faith once delivered" is the body of doctrine and practice that Baptist churches must adhere to in order to be sound.

I will offer some brief observations that I consider to be necessary for a Baptist church to be considered sound.

1. They must believe and preach the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection as the only means of salvation (Rom. 1:16; Gal. 1:5-9; I Cor. 15:1-4).

2. They must believe in salvation by sovereign grace from beginning to end (Eph. 2:8-10). The five points of the doctrines of grace should be believed and embraced. They must believe that regeneration is a work of the Holy Spirit followed immediately by conversion through the Word consisting of the gifts of repentance and faith. There is no time lapse between regeneration and conversion.

3. They must be missionary, proven by their obedience to the Great Commission given by Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18-20).

4. They must uphold and protect the two ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Only Baptist baptism is to be regarded as scriptural consisting of proper authority, symbolic in nature, immersion for the mode, and the subject of baptism can only be a professing believer. No alien immersion from Protestant groups can be received, nor can a Baptist church receive baptism from another Baptist church in name only that actively receives alien immersion. The Lord's Supper can only be extended to the members of the local church (no Open Communion).

5. Church discipline should be

practiced on a regular basis (I Cor. 5).

6. They must believe in the authority of the Word of God as their guide for all doctrine and practice.

7. They must maintain separation from the ideals and habits of the world system that is opposed to God and His Word (I Thess. 4, I John 2:15-17).

8. They must have a genuine love for one another within the membership (John 13:34-35, I John 4:7-12).

9. They must believe that Jesus Christ is the Head of the church body (I Cor. 12) and they are to be submissive to His Word and ways. The government of the church is to be a pure democracy that submits to the administration of the Holy Spirit. No human hierarchy is to exist within the church.

10. They must believe in the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 22:20).

There are 10 points that every church could start with. Read the New Testament and embrace its teachings. Find a church that believes and practices the above and you will be part of a sound church. Keep in mind that no Baptist church is perfect because it is made up of sinners who have been saved by grace.

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This is a good and important question, but a very difficult one to answer. Not because sound doctrine is that hard to define, but because Baptists pride themselves on being independent. When most churches set about teaching 'Baptist Distinctives' they use the acrostics from the word Baptist.

The second letter, "A" stands for 'autonomous local church' which, as taught, has little to do with good Baptist ecclesiology but emphasizes independence. "No one's going to tell us what we have to believe!"

I suggest there is a place for associations and that there should be some doctrinal requirements for associating with those associations. The whole issue surrounding Acts 15 speaks of an associational requirement of what belief and practice identified a proper, sound Baptist Church. Historically, Baptists have had 'confessions of faith'; not replacing the "B" in the acrostics (Biblical Authority) but summarizing the beliefs that hold Baptists together. The most noted of these would be the first and second London confessions and the Philadelphia confession. Most of us in our circles find some of the elements of these confessions a little weak in some

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# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

Does the Bible teach the restoration of Israel and Judah? – Kentucky

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This question is also difficult to answer in a short space. While we do not consider ourselves anywhere near an expert on eschatology, we do have an 8, 8½X 11-page set of notes (7 pages just notes and one map) answering a similar question from another source, referring to the future of Israel. We would gladly mail or e-mail these notes upon request.

There are a lot of Scripture verses referring to the future of Israel. These references obviously do not and cannot refer to the glory days of David and Solomon, nor can they refer to the 1948 UN action that established the current political nation of Israel.

Genesis 15:18 gives the boundary of a Promised Land that Israel has never fully possessed.

Numbers 34:1-12 and Deut. 11:23-24 also describe a boundary as yet not occupied by Israel.

The prophecy of Joel 3:17-21 is 200 years after the glory days of David and Solomon, so even the extended 'empire' of David and Solomon cannot be seen as fulfillment of that prophecy.

Psa. 89:1-4, 34-37 predicts a yet future reign for the House (throne) of David.

Paul clearly sees a restoration of Israel. (Rom. 9:4; 11:1-4, 25)

Finally, we notice that God promised the land to Abraham and his seed forever. (Gen 13:14-15)

God's promises are 'yea and amen' (2 Cor. 1:20). Paul rightly says, "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4) so we can safely look for yet future restoration of Israel when the promised Messiah, the 'Son of David' will rule from the reestablished throne of David on earth.

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Yes, the Bible does teach the restoration of both Israel and Judah. "Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD;

**Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand"** (Ezek 37:19). In fact the whole 37th chapter of Ezekiel foretells the eventual restoration of both kingdoms. The tribes were divided because of idolatrous worship, 1Kings 12:25-33. The Children of Israel will be reunited as one nation and converted to Christ as their Saviour in the latter days, Jer. 31:35-37, Ezek. 37:26, with the covenant of peace that only comes thru the blood of Jesus Christ.

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Absolutely! Read the Old Testament prophets and you will find numerous references to the restoration of Israel and Judah. Romans chapter eleven also clearly teaches that God intends to restore His chosen nation. This spiritual restoration of elect Israel will take place at the beginning of the Millennium when Christ comes to reign on the earth for 1000 years.

Three Old Testament passages are very clear regarding the restoration of Judah and Israel. Jeremiah 23:5-6 states: **"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."**

Jeremiah 33:14-15 declares: **"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land."**

Hosea 3:4-5 states: **"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: Afterward shall**

**the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days."**

In the New Testament, Matthew 19:28 clearly intimates that all 12 tribes of the nation of Israel will be restored in the Millennium: **"And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."**

There are many more Scriptures that could be cited. Let these suffice to prove that there is a definite future for Israel in the Millennium and on into the Eternal Ages.

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**"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew"** (Rom. 11:1-2).

**"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled"** (Luke 21:24).

There are basically two ways to approach Biblical prophecy. You can take it literally or spiritualize it away. If you take these two passages literally, then you believe that God is going to restore the nation of Israel. If you believe that the Bible doesn't mean what it says (spiritualization), then you might not believe God will restore Israel.

I believe the Bible says what it means and means what it says. I do not believe God is in the business of tricking people. The Scripture plainly says that God is not finished with the nation of Israel. The Scripture plainly says that Christ will reign for 1000 years from David's throne in Jerusalem. There are many promises made to the nation of Israel which have not yet been fulfilled. I do not believe God has revoked those promises. God is a Keeper of promises.

Yes. The Bible teaches that Israel will be restored. Do you believe it means

what it says?

TODD BRYANT

## Forum #1

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areas.

It would take a whole book to delineate the doctrines that mark a church as a 'sound Baptist church' but I think we could safely, although very briefly, outline them thusly, in two categories, only going into as much practical detail as may be needed to clarify what sets Baptists apart from others that seem to hold the same positions.

First, those doctrines that are held by all true Christians:

1. The Bible, meaning the 66 books we recognize as canonical, is inspired of God, inerrant, infallible, and the only and final authority for faith and practice.

2. The deity of Christ, and the Holy Trinity of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

3. The fall of man, requiring the sacrificial, vicarious death of Jesus Christ. (see more below)

4. The second coming of Christ.

Second, the doctrines, or practical application of some of the above, that set Baptists apart. These mostly fall into the areas of soteriology and ecclesiology.

Soteriology--

1. The TOTAL depravity of fallen man, requiring the divine election and grace of God to grant life, repentance, and faith unto salvation. – John 6:44 (i.e.: the doctrines of grace.)

2. Salvation by grace alone (Rom. 11:6) based solely on the finished work of our Lord (Heb. 1:3) excluding any and all effort of man (Eph. 2:8-9) but resulting in the 'new creature' of 2 Cor. 5:17 (Eph. 2:10).

Ecclesiology--

1. Visible Local church as opposed to invisible universal church.

2. Regenerate membership (A credible testimony of salvation before consideration for membership.)

3. Believer's baptism by immersion as the only fitting proclamation of death, burial and resurrection with Christ (Rom. 6:4).

4. Scriptural baptism as a prerequisite of church membership and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:41-42).

Baptist confessions of faith are notably vague on Eschatology (The doctrine of last things). This writer holds to what is known as the 'pre-trib/pre-mil' position as the clearest and most logical position from Scripture, but I don't think we could exclude brethren holding to a mid or post tribulation position. I do think, however, that an Amillennial or post-millennial position would set one apart from being recognized as Baptist.

RAY BENNETT

# My Yoke Is Easy--

(Continued from page 369) ♦

in Hebrews 4:10. This means that we get saved when we simply trust Jesus and cease from our own works. Then in our text (Matt. 11:29-30) Jesus invites us that are saved to take up His yoke, to wear His yoke, and find further rest in serving with and learning from Him.

## HIS YOKE---HIS BURDEN

I think that the secret of finding this “rest for our souls” even as we bear the burden of a figurative yoke, paradoxically, is in remembering that Jesus calls it “**My yoke**,” “**My burden**.”

Of course, He means the yoke that He wears and asks us to share, the burden that He carries of which He asks us who are His disciples to carry a small part.

But it is still His yoke, His burden; and so, no matter how heavy it may be on Him, He can still assure us that---for us---it is easy, it is light: He can make it so for us, for it is His.

## JUDGMENT

The heaviest burden that can rest upon a human soul (though the lost soul may not realize it until he wakes up in Hell) is God’s judgment against sin and sinners. But for the children of God this soul-crushing burden, for legal purposes, was laid upon Christ, and so we are free from the law.

God “**made him that knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him**” (II Cor. 5:21, corrected translation.)

Such judgment as remains for a Christian to bear in this life is the loving discipline of our heavenly Father designed for our correction. At the judgment seat of Christ we shall be judged for rewards for faithful service. But the legal punishment for our sins was laid upon Christ, and so we “**shall not come into condemnation**” (John 5:24).

## FEAR

“**God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind**” (II Tim. 1:7).

“**We may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me**” (Heb. 13:6).

“**Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage**” (Heb. 2:14-15).

Among the most encouraging words of Jesus to His disciples was the simple and oft-repeated admonition, “**Fear not**.” The fearful Christian is a disobedient Christian and is far from perfect in that love which casts out fear.

Surely, as imperfect followers of a perfect Master we need to have a

Godly fear. But this is a light burden in comparison with the grievous fear of death, the fear of eternal judgment, and even the fear of man, which our Lord has lifted from us.

## RELIGION

Some of the heaviest burdens that men carry in this world are religious burdens. Even the detailed laws and ceremonial regulations of Moses, though given by divine direction, and far less burdensome than the bonds and shackles of heathen religions, were yet too heavy for anyone except Jesus to carry through to fulfillment.

And so when the Judaizers sought to bring Gentile Christians under the ceremonial law, Peter asked the question, “**Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?**” (Acts 15:10).

The religious yoke which Jesus calls us to wear is not a burdensome yoke of ritualism and ceremony, but of willing, loving, and joyful service. “**In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love**” (Gal. 5:6). “**Not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver**” (II Cor. 9:7).

## TEMPTATIONS

Too many Christians forget to pray as Jesus commanded, “**Lead us not into temptation**,” and then complain about their many trials and temptations, which they might have avoided if they had been “**instant in prayer**.”

Even so, “**There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it**” (I Cor. 10:13).

How many of us have learned to “**glory in tribulations also**”? Whether we can do this or not it is included in Romans 5:3 as a part of normal Christian experience.

For an example of one disciple who learned this lesson, Paul tells us in II Corinthians 12 that he was given “**a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan**.” Three times he prayed to the Lord that this thorn might depart, but it was God’s will rather that the apostle should learn to bear his affliction, and so the answer was, “**My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness**” (II Cor. 12:7-9).

## DEATH

Even death, the last enemy to be destroyed, has lost part of its sting: “**O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ**” (I Cor. 15:55-57). Death is therefore a far lighter burden for

Christians than for the lost.

So with reference to the death of our loved ones we are admonished to “**sorrow not, even as others which have no hope**” (I Thess. 4:13). And when we ourselves come to meet this appointment we can say with David as with all true saints, “**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me**” (Ps. 23).

## WORRY

It seems sometimes that Christians who have the lightest burdens to worry about worry the most. Yet our Lord commands us again and again to take no anxious thought for tomorrow, to let not our hearts be troubled, to be careful for nothing (that is, not to worry about anything.)

Perhaps one of the most foolish and sinful habits of otherwise intelligent creatures is the habit of worry. This habit is foolish for anybody and especially sinful for a Christian, who is supposed to have learned to trust Christ. Again we need to remember that our yoke is His, our burden is His.

It is no accident that Peter by inspiration couples humility with freedom from worry or care. When analyzed, all our anxieties come from the pride of hearts not fully surrendered to God’s will.

“**Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care** (worry) **upon him; for he careth for you**” (I Pet. 5:6-7).

## THE HEAVY END

I can remember that as a child I sometimes wanted to help my father or an older brother carry a piece of lumber when, of course, a little boy would be more hindrance than help. But sometimes the adult would take hold of a piece of lumber near the middle or of the heavy end of a rail or post and let me take the light end, bearing little or no weight in my hands. So it is with our being yoked with Jesus: for us His yoke is easy, His burden is light, because He carries the heavy end.



# CELLBLOCK TO CELLBLOCK

By David G. Hoffman

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

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

# Quacking In A Clucking World

Do you remember the childhood fable about the duckling raised by a hen and her brood? Well, one day the duckling spied a pond, and much to the chagrin of the hen, he waddled over and jumped in quacking and splashing. The duckling realized he was not a chicken, no matter how loud the hen clucked from shore.

I had such a moment in the spring of 2001.

But first let me give you some background. I began serving a 12 ½ to 25 year sentence in 1998 at a dingy Texas prison. I tried living up to the other prisoner’s expectations---and if truth be known---the administration’s too. “Git in where you fit in” was the unspoken rule: only the strong survive.

My first chance to “fit in” came three days after arriving in the concrete and steel jungle I’d call home for the next dozen or so years. I was writing a letter at a table in the dayroom when Jose\* walked up clenching his fist. It was time to test my mettle.

When the guards broke it up I was badly beaten, but I had gained respect for not backing down. I later discovered the white prisoners in the dorm instigated this test to see if I would stand up for

myself; they were members of two prison gangs. Both wanted to see if I had ‘heart,’ and if so, recruit me.

I eventually made a choice. Then, two years later when the administration decided the gang I chose was a threat to the general population, I found myself in administrative segregation, single cell lockdown.

My “duckling moment” came a year later.

Bill\*, another segregation prisoner, asked me to read a poem he’d written. A Christian poem. Far from a religious man, I read the poem only as a favor to Bill---I figured I didn’t need to be a saint to know good poetry. But this poem was more than rhyming words and catchy phrases, it motivated me to dig the dusty Bible from the back of my locker and begin reading it.

Most prisoners keep a Bible to write their addresses in, it’s the only book the guards won’t throw away. But mine was more than an address book now---I read it every day after reading Bill’s poem. . .and still do.

Then it happened.

The Lord plucked the scales from my eyes and drew me to Himself. Most of the guys around me thought I’d lost my mind, others said it was like someone flipped a light switch and I was a different person. And they were right. I wasn’t the

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## Cellblock to Cellblock

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same guy they'd known, sure, it was the same tattooed flesh and blood they all knew but the old man had died and a new creature was born within.

**"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are past away; behold, all things are become new"** (II Cor. 5:17).

By the grace of God I was able to look around my chicken coop and realize I wasn't a chicken. I was quacking and splashing in a new pond. The guards and other prisoners stood on the shore clucking that I couldn't have morals, virtues, and spiritual convictions---didn't I know I was in prison? It didn't matter to me.

**"And at midnight Paul and Silas [who were in prison] prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them"** (Acts 16:25).

From the beginning I had an insatiable thirst for the Word, and all of a sudden I didn't care what others thought. Let them laugh and scorn if they will; nothing can dampen the joy in my heart.

**"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things"** (I Cor. 2:14, 15).

Right after my conversion I signed up for the Gang Renunciation And Disassociation (GRAD) Program. This program is designed to reintegrate ex-gangmembers from segregation back into the general population. And a few months later the Lord brought someone into my life who became my mentor, my friend, and my dear brother. He and his family have become my family and I'll never be the same because of it. Thank You and I love you brother, you remain an answer to prayer. Then I spent the next five years in segregation waiting for an opening in the program, studying God's Word, and corresponding with my mentor.

In the winter of 2003 I wrote what became my first article in the *Berea Baptist Banner*. I had an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education topped off with a G.E.D. but no formal writer training, just a sense of the Lord leading me to write. It was a year and a half before I sent that article to the *Banner*, and in between I had the opportunity to take a magazine writing correspondence course. I began the course thinking I was going to be the next James Patterson, or some such, but the Lord had other plans.

**"There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand"** (Prov. 19:21).

I finally sent that article to the *Banner* in the winter of 2004 and it was published in the April 2005 issue, by the end of the year they would publish three more and I

would finish the writing course. In fact, it was while preparing my last assignment that it really sunk in and I realized Christian writing is what I was being led to do.

The Lord has given me a desire to write for Him and a desire to reach out to others in prison like myself. So in Feb./March 2006 I sent Bro. Cockrell, editor of the *Banner*, four more articles and a proposal for a prisoner outreach column.

Then I was uprooted.

I finally, after five years, got a spot in the GRAD Program. A week after arriving at the new unit I received a letter from Bro. Cockrell, in it he said, "I felt that the Lord has given you a desire to write and I felt that it was time for a section devoted to the prison population. . . From the title I gave the section, Cellblock To Cellblock, I felt it would convey a simple truth of one person speaking to another, which is what the Gospel is all about; witnessing to others about Christ." And thus this column was born.

As I've said before, I don't have a seminary degree, but I believe the Lord gave me those five years of segregation to study His Word for such a time as this. I am where you are, on the wrong side of the prison bars. This environment is like no other and those who have never lived it can't relate to it. I live it every day, I know the daily struggles. The things I write are as much for my own encouragement as they are for yours. I plan on discussing some of those struggles and temptations in the coming months and years as the Lord allows.

There is one thing I would ask of you, dear reader. Please pray for my continued strength and courage as I reintegrate back into the general population, and for boldness that I may live the Truth, write the Truth, and shout the Truth from the rooftops!

When I finish this GRAD Program I'll be facing the same perils I faced when I first came in the system in 1998, but this time I'll have a Protector that no gang can out do. If God be for me, who can be against me?

I would like to thank Bro. Cockrell for his encouragement and giving me this opportunity; and my mentor for his encouragement, support, and prayers. Bro. Campbell, keep fighting the good fight---you are not alone.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

\*Names have been changed.



## Moses, My Servant Is Dead

By Raymond Bennett  
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**"Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them.**



**Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.**

**Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest"** (Josh. 1:1-9).

It's a difficult time for Israel; and it's a difficult time for any church in a similar situation.

Moses had led the nation for 40 years. He had been a strong, capable, and courageous leader. Leading a people that was generally rebellious and complaining people; a people who were often ready to go back into bondage rather than face the responsibilities and sometimes sacrifices related with their freedom.

Freedom has its costs; both in

political freedom and religious freedom. Sometimes it is difficult to separate religious freedom from political freedom, but that is not our subject here. Religious freedom and its responsibility is our subject. First generation Israel had not been willing to forego the transitory and entrapping luxuries that came with their bondage to Egypt, even though they had cried out in despair because of that bondage. There are many 'would be' Christians that fall into that category. They want escape from the bondage and consequences of sin but are not willing to forego the transitory and entrapping pleasures of sin. Are you one of them?

Oh, but please listen, the eternal pleasures -- even those realized while still in this body -- far out weigh the transitory pleasures of sin and have less damaging 'side effects,' although there is a sense in which they are just as entrapping. To enjoy the *blessings* of God you must be in the *family* of God.

Paul writes, Romans 6:16 **"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?"**

Another cotangential point that should be brought up here is that there may have been Jews left behind in Egypt for no better reason than that they wouldn't believe the promises from Moses and therefore would not obey the Passover commands and requirements. The promise that the first-born would be spared was a valid promise -- to all. But the validity of the promise was rendered invalid by unbelief. Unbelief issues in disobedience, even if the promises are academically believed. Because belief issues in obedience. That's what James 2:18 is all about. **"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works."** How many of you are proudly and *academically* believing the promises and doctrines of the gospel, but are not obeying the commands and requirements of the gospel?

Moses had been a strong leader. He *had* to be a strong leader to lead this rebellious people. Joshua was to Moses as Timothy was to Paul. He had learned by serving---by experience---and example. But now that the responsibility of leadership has fallen on *his* shoulders, it seems he was a little timid. Listen to Paul's advice to Timothy! Moses might well have given the same advice to Joshua.

**"Let no man despise thy youth. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."**

II. Moses had been taken out of the way for a reason. We suggest that the people had become too dependent on him. Instead of trusting God, and

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## Mini-Edition

by Joseph Harris

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## Kid's Rule, Literally

On a regular basis, some church or pastor calls me at least once a month looking for church staff personnel. The most often requested position is youth pastor. Their appeal usually includes some of the following statements:

*"We are losing our young people"*

*"We've got to offer something for our youth"*

*"We need a young person who can relate to the youth"*

*"Our youth are not that interested in church, we need more activities to draw them"*

*"We want to give the kids what they want so we need someone who will let them listen to their kind of music"*

The motive of these desperate people is usually unquestionable. They are concerned about their youth and the future of the church. The problem, however, is this: they have fallen prey to the old liberal philosophy that kids are supposed to rule and set the standard. Years ago, the world bought into this bankrupt philosophy and the church followed suit almost immediately. I have noticed that most of the churches concerned about losing their youth and incorporate worldly programs, have already lost them. Oh, they may have them physically in attendance, but they have lost them morally and spiritually.

Children and youth do not need someone who can "relate" to them as much as they need authority to guide them and set and maintain standards. In the quest to make the Bible relevant, we have lowered standards and lost the respect of those we are trying to reach and teach, then we wonder what went wrong.

The tired old mantra I keep hearing is that we have to accept the dress and music of kids today (though not all new Christian music is bad, most of it is shallow and caters to the flesh). Why? Aren't we supposed to *set* the standard? Notice, I am not speaking of tossing out sinners who don't conform exactly to what I expect in their appearance. We should welcome and love the lost and try to earnestly win them. I am talking about the church kids who are supposed to be already following Christ and can be taught. I am glad when the lost with or without a worldly appearance, visit our church. Christian standards for them are not a priority. Winning them to Christ is the priority. Teaching should then follow.

Why do so many have a defeatist attitude? Why do we have to accept the ungodly dress, piercings, language, attitudes and disrespect in modern MTV youth culture, as the standard for our youth? The answer is, we don't. Instead of accepting a pagan standard, we should establish a regenerated standard. But you better put on your boxing gloves and get ready for a fight. Be prepared, the biggest battle will be with the parents and church leaders. Then, having done all, stand.

**The Rantings  
and  
Ravings  
of  
Brother  
Ritechus  
N.  
Dignation**



## Your Sunday Best

I'm fired up again. I mean I'm really stirred up. I just came from church, but from the way folks were dressed, you would have thought we were at the county fair. Last week, I attended a funeral and the dearly departed was dressed better than the bereaved. I've seen folks dress better for a hog call'in.

It used to be that people took pride in themselves and dressed up for church, weddings, funerals and other special occasions. Now anything goes and nobody bats an eye at the sorry and ungodly way folks cover their hide (or don't cover, in some cases).

Now I know the old argument "What's on the inside is more important than what's on the outside," is technically true, but the label on a can also tells you what's inside. My wife used to buy those unlabeled, dented cans for a quarter at the grocery store, but I got tired of eat'in cat food casserole. What's on the outside is pretty important in my book.

My wife and daughter went to a bridal shower where the bride and other guests wore tacky jeans and shorts. They were out of place in their nice skirts and dress shoes. People tell me to loosen up cause times have changed. Dadgum right and that's the problem. A sense of propriety, pride and decency have been lost in this generation and no one seems to care or notice but old fogeys like me. We've come a long way, baby, but we're going in the wrong direction.

Nakedness in public is the norm, and not just from the younger folks. I see older people who know better, showing way too much skin, from top to bottom. Mothers and Grandmothers ought to be ashamed for leading young girls astray. The Bible says the older women are to teach the younger and brother they've done exactly that, but they have put the

emphasis on modern apparel and not modest apparel.

And preacher, dress up. Comb your hair, tuck in your shirt and put on a tie. It ain't gonna kill you to look professional. After all, you can't out dress your calling.

Brother Ritechus N. Dignation.



## Moses, My Servant

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following His appointed leader, they were depending on Moses to be a 'go between'; leaving all the responsibility up to him.

Both Joshua and the people had observed, and hopefully learned, the devastating effect that a contrary and stubborn people have on a leader; a leader who is responsible to God before he is responsible to the people. They had so frustrated Moses that even the man of whom the Bible says was "**meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth**" lost his temper at Meribah, acted on his emotions, broke the type, and was forbidden to take the people on into the Promised Land.

Moses reminded them of that a couple of times. (Deut. 1:7; 4:21)

How wonderful the relationship between a people, church or nation, and their God ordained leader, that has, and can, last for 20, 30, 40 or more years. Like a good marriage, that relationship grows closer each day. The issue of submission and obedience, that may have been an issue in the early years, dissolves into a mutual love and respect; each party just naturally falling into their respective positions, and mutually respecting and depending on each other. Perhaps this is what Paul has in mind as he introduces the issue of submission in Ephesians 5:21, "**Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.**"

How traumatic and sad when that relationship is broken in the course of time by death, or on rare occasions, the leader being called away! We suggest that the two and three year pastorate is not the norm for a proper church/pastor relationship. Nevertheless, there *are* incidents when a man is called away from a good relationship, to another work, as was Philip from Samaria (Acts 8).

But unfortunately the relationship between Moses and Israel hadn't been that way.

They murmured at Marah. They murmured in the desert - before and after receiving the manna! They murmured at Rephidim. They murmured at Meribah. There were at least two attempts to mutiny. They refused to believe and obey at Kadesh. *And Joshua knew all this!*

How sad and devastating the relationship between a people, church or nation, when the friction breeds contention and separation! A church does not grow! The people do not get

well taught or grounded in the Word of God. They become the opposite of what Paul desires in Ephesians 4:14, "**That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.**"

Oh, how many churches we have seen ruined; ruined because, for whatever reason, there was too much contention between church and pastor, or they had not been sufficiently grounded and called a man who led them astray, or the pastor only saw the 'little' church as a stepping-stone to 'greater things'.

*Granted, there are also occasions when the pastor was leading the church astray and, thank God, the church was astute enough to see it and make the change. Praise God for the pastor(s) who had so well grounded and prepared such a church!*

How pathetic the pastor whose ministry in any given place is reduced to 2 or 3 years---or less---because the people would not follow his leadership! How sad that---in our current day---there are so many churches without pastors and pastors without churches---not because of a lack of laborers but because of one or the other of the above situations. How sad that there must be some pastors who must be *constrained* to take the office, perhaps *because* of the above situations, therefore needing Peter's exhortation, "**Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly**" (1 Pet. 5:1-5).

The writer of Hebrews implores us, "**Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you**" (Heb. 13:17).

Perhaps Joshua felt that way. Knowing the responsibility of the office and the contentious nature of the people, he may very well have been timid. Just taking the responsibility is enough to make a man timid, but knowing that the people will, and do, so often murmur and contend with him makes him even more timid and reluctant to take the office.

Many years ago while serving as a missionary on the Cattaraugus Indian Reservation, we had a man, we thought well capable and qualified to take the church as pastor so we could move on to another place, but knowing the awesome responsibility of the office, and in that particular case the contention of the people, he would not assume that office.

*Be of good courage, Joshua!*

I wonder how many times Joshua heard, "But Moses always did it *this* way." Moses had left a man-sized vacuum. A vacuum that only a spiritual giant could fill. No mere boy could fill it!

A pastor who has served a church for

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# Moses, My Servant

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many years leaves a man-sized vacuum. May God be merciful and gracious to the man who must fill it! How many times must he hear, "But Pastor so and so always did it *this way*"?

Joshua could not be, and must not try to be a clone of Moses! Israel must not expect him to be a clone of Moses! Your next pastor will not be a clone of the former pastor---and you cannot ask him to be a clone of your former pastor!

Many is the church today that is not recognizing the man God may well have called to be their pastor, for no better reason than that they are looking for a clone of their former pastor.

His pulpit mannerisms may be different. His presentation may not be as polished. He may be young and still need to learn a few things.

For Joshua, to do the task before him, must spend hours in prayer and be led of God. Any pastor worth his salt will spend hours in prayer and be led of God.

III. There is one basic requirement. **"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest"** (Joshua 1:7-9). That requirement – observance of the Law---the Word of God!

But in this requirement we see 4 sub requirements; requirements which I suggest both church and pastor must be meet.

First there must be knowledge of the Word of God! To Obey the law, you have to Know the law.

We give credit to so many that are attempting to live and function correctly, as believers and as churches, but for lack of knowledge they are falling so far short. Some because they refuse and reject sound doctrine, but we will merely mention them here. They will have their just reward!

We are more concerned with the many who have wandered, as sheep without a shepherd, even though they may have a shepherd; but a shepherd who, himself, is following religious tradition instead of solid Bible doctrine. Jeremiah 23 has harsh words for those shepherds that **"cause my people to err."**

It is sometimes hard to understand this ignorance because the words of Scripture are so clear, but years of traditional teaching have reversed the concept in men's minds so that they just don't seem to see the clear, concise expression in the 'thundering diction' of the King James.

We give you just two clear, poignant examples. *Look at the verses! Listen to the verses!* Then compare them with what you may have been traditionally taught.

Matthew 3:11, **"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:"**

John 10:26, **"But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you."** *That's a complete 180° reversal of most of what passes for evangelism today;* the product of the illicit taking of the forbidden fruit by our federal head, Adam, back yonder in the garden; pointed out in Isaiah 5:20, **"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil."**

**"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them"** (Isa. 8:20).

Oh, for a Josiah - and a people like those who followed Josiah. When they discovered the Law of God they repented, worshiped, and obeyed the law.

This, then, brings us to the second 'sub requirement---continual study. **This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.** Did you ever notice that God's instructions for all the major worship ceremonies included the phrase **"beside the burnt offering"** or **"beside the continual offering"**?

Acts 6:4, **"But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word"** applies to the pastor but it does *not* excuse the congregation from being in the word and knowing the word. Please notice the order of events in Acts 2:41-42. The first step of Christian obedience is scriptural baptism. Then the next step is **"continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine."**

The third sub requirement is obedience. We have tried to make obedience a primary point throughout this message. It presents a bit of a paradox. You have to know the Word of God to obey the Word of God, but did you also know that you have to obey known doctrine before you can learn more doctrine? And there has to be a *predisposition* to obedience to know the will of God.

John 7:17 is a verse we should all memorize and apply. **"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."**

That principle applies to Holy Spirit enlightenment, but it *also* applies to recognizing the truth, or lack of it, in

this message---or the message any man brings from a pulpit. *It also applies to the knowledge of Jesus Christ unto salvation!*

Notice, please, Jesus' response to Peter's great confession of faith! **"For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven"** (Matt. 16:17). The knowledge of God is, itself, the gift of God! Like the dry bones of Ezekiel 37, you cannot live---spiritually or physically---unless God grants you life. You cannot believe unless God grants you the same revelation He granted Peter. *Oh, the tremendous--- and important---difference between academic recognition of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and spiritual, personal faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God!*

Which knowledge do you have?

And finally, courage! **"Be strong and of a good courage:...Only be thou strong and very courageous."**

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

Then "thou shalt have good success."

Time fails us, but we must at least mention that 'success' is defined by God's sovereign standards, not by comparison with what some 'mega church' is doing

– with all its worldly and entertaining programs

It took courage for Joshua to assume the leadership responsibility that he inherited from Moses.

It took courage for the people to follow Joshua across the flooded Jordan and to conquer the giants in the land.

It took courage for the prophets of Israel to stand before wicked kings and proclaim the truth from God.

It took courage for the first century believers to identify with Jesus Christ! The gospels record that there were believers during our Lord's earthly ministry that didn't have the courage to publicly identify with him.

It takes courage even today to really identify with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Do you have that courage?

Do you have the courage to stand alone, like Elijah and Daniel – and so many Bible saints?

Do you have the courage to stand, faithful unto death and persecution, as our forefathers did?

Do you have the courage to stand alone, in the midst of a traditional religious society, and identify with the truth of the Bible---obey the commands and standards of the Bible?



THE

## BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

### SENATE REJECTS MARRIAGE PROTECTION AMENDMENT

(EP)-- The federal Marriage Protection Amendment was debated in the U.S. Senate this week, but it ultimately went down in defeat by a vote of 49-48 on June 7.

The vote was on a procedural matter, and not on the amendment itself, but it was considered a fairly accurate indication of the will of the Senate on the issue. The 49 votes in favor of ending debate and calling for a vote on the floor were 11 short of the 60 needed, and far short of the 67 votes that would be needed for passage of an amendment to the Constitution.

This defeat came despite support from pro-family groups and President George W. Bush, who made a rare public statement on June 5 with pro-family groups to urge support for the measure. A marriage amendment to the U.S. Constitution is necessary, Bush said, "because activist courts have left our nation with no other choice."

Both sides claimed victory. The mostly Democrats opposed to the amendment say the vote shows that it has no chance of passage, and they accused President Bush and the Republican leadership of playing partisan politics in order to mobilize its base.

Conservatives, on the other hand, said it was important to put the senators on the record on this issue.

Bush suggested the ban was proper and its time would still come. He said, "Our nation's founders set a high bar for amending our Constitution and history has shown us that it can take several tries before an amendment builds the two-thirds support it needs in both houses of Congress."

Stuart Shepard of Focus on the Family told EP News that the vote would help conservatives see those states where the senators are out of step with the will of the people. "In every state where this issue has been put to the people, traditional marriage has been upheld overwhelmingly," Shepard said. "This vote tells us where we should concentrate our efforts."

Shepard also dismissed Democratic criticism that it was all about politics. "Give me a break," he said. "This is Washington. What's not about politics there. Of course, this is about politics, and we should not apologize for that."

Sen. David Vitter of Louisiana added: "Eventually, Congress is going to have to catch up to the wisdom of the American people or

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the American people will change Congress for the better.”

The 49 votes to keep the amendment alive were one more than the measure received the last time the Senate voted, in 2004. Proponents had predicted the amendment would get at least a 51-vote majority in the 100-member Senate with the gain four Republican seats since then.

Forty-five of the 50 states have acted to define traditional marriage in ways that would ban same-sex marriage — 19 with state constitutional amendments and 26 with statutes.

The proposed federal amendment would prohibit states from recognizing same-sex marriages. After approval by Congress, it would have to be ratified by at least 38 state legislatures.

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### POLICE ALLEGEDLY HARASS PRO-FAMILY GROUP AT PROMISE KEEPERS EVENT

(EP)—(CitizenLink) Volunteers circulating petitions to place a state marriage-protection amendment on the 2008 Florida ballot say they were victims of police harassment last weekend.

Attorney Rick Nelson, president of the American Legal Institute, said workers for the Florida4Marriage campaign were attending a Promise Keepers event at the Bank Atlantic Center, in Sunrise, Fla., near Ft. Lauderdale.

“On Saturday, June 3rd, as they were distributing petitions related to this marriage amendment, City of Sunrise police officers approached the volunteers and demanded that they remove the petitions from public view,” Nelson said, “meaning that they did not want to allow these volunteers to continue giving the public information about the Florida Marriage Amendment.”

The volunteers complied at first, according to John Stemberger, president and general counsel of the Florida Family Policy Council.

Stemberger, state chairman of the Florida4Marriage campaign, said his group paid \$800 to have a booth at the civic center with the understanding that they would circulate petitions and distribute literature.

“I couldn’t believe it,” he told CitizenLink. “I was stunned that police would do this.”

Stemberger said the officer in charge identified himself as Sunrise Police Sgt. Stephen Allen.

“I confronted the officer and asked if he had ordered the volunteers to put the petitions away, and he said he had,” Stemberger said. “I then proceeded to ask him the legal authority for that. And that’s when the amazing thing started.”

The officer, he said, started haranguing him, not about any law or ordinance, but about theology and his personal views on gay marriage.

“He said that Jesus never mentioned homosexuality in the New Testament -- which is not exactly accurate,” Stemberger said. “He went on and on talking about theology.”

Stemberger alleges the officer also made abusive and intimidating comments -- and even taunted volunteers by mock kissing another officer.

What he did not do, according to the Florida activist, was give any legal reason for why the group could not distribute petitions.

“He would not give me the basis for his authority,” Stemberger said, “for telling me why we could not distribute petitions at this event that we paid to be there for.”

An attorney, Stemberger said he tried several times to reason with the officer.

“After I pressed him, he said, ‘Look, I’m the governing authority, and the Bible says you’re to obey the governing authorities.’ And I said, ‘Sir, we’re all under authority, and you’re under the authority of the United States Constitution, which you are now violating.’”

Stemberger said the officer eventually told him that there was “a standing rule at the civic center” that flyers and petitions could not be passed out.

“So, after consulting with legal counsel, I thought, you know what, I’m going to go to the mat on this,” he said. “This is totally improper. He’s harassing us. He’s suppressing our constitutional right to peacefully assemble, speak freely and petition the government.”

“So I went back to the table and put all the petitions back on the table with the clipboards.

“He said, ‘You remove them immediately, or I will arrest you.’ And I said, ‘Sir, you’re going to have to arrest me because you’re acting without authority.’”

Stemberger said the 45-minute incident finally ended without arrests or further complications after an administrator from the civic center showed up and confronted the officer, telling him to stand down.

“We have filed a grievance with the internal affairs division of the Sunrise Police Department,” Stemberger said.

Calls to the police department were not returned by press time.

Rick Nelson, whose group is affiliated with the Alliance Defense Fund, said the real shock is that this kind of incident is happening all across the country -- and is occurring more and more frequently.

“I deal with this exact type of incident on a regular basis,” he said. “This is nothing unusual -- in the sense of the police coming against the Christian viewpoint. I would characterize it as a trend that will continue.”

Nelson said Americans -- especially Christian Americans -- must respect authority, but must also stand their ground.

“If we don’t,” he said, “we’ll lose those precious freedoms of speech and expressing our viewpoints in the public square.”

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### IN THE U.K., ABORTING A BABY IS LEGAL, BUT DEPICTING IT IS A CRIME

Our cousins in Great Britain, from whom we inherited a language, a political culture and, most specifically, the principle of freedom of speech, are going off the deep end, to judge from the jailing of Edward Atkinson. Here’s the background:

Last year, the U.K. was rocked by a high-profile abortion case. This was because the demise of “Baby A,” as she became known, was photographed and videotaped. This evidence of her brutal end was widely distributed in the U.K.

The abortion took place at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Kings Lynn, Norfolk, not far from where Mr. Atkinson lives. This veteran pro-life campaigner decided to

educate the hospital’s chief executive, Ruth May, in the horrors of such events. He sent copies of the photographs and other literature to Ms. May.

Upon receiving the pictures, Ruth May complained to the authorities. The Director of Public Prosecutions, as district attorneys are known in the U.K., promptly ordered Atkinson’s arrest on the charge of “sending offensive materials through the mails.” The police then dragged the 75-year-old Catholic, who is nearly crippled with arthritis, from his home and held him in prison until his court date.

In court, the hospital staff recounted how the photographs had upset their delicate sensibilities. Ruth May’s secretary, Christine Rogers, said she was “upset” when she opened the letter from Atkinson containing a picture of Baby A. The hospital’s “complaints and litigation manager,” Karl Perryman, said that “as a father of two daughters” he had been “quite disturbed” by the images he had been shown. Ms. May herself opined that “It is upsetting for everyone.” She went on to say that “I believe people who work for the National Health Service, and particularly at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, are passionate about providing excellent care for their patients.”

All except for those they abort, of course. In that case their “passion” is reserved for those who have the courage to remind them of what they are doing to tiny babies. Such pricks to their (perhaps guilty) consciences make them “upset” and “disturbed.”

Atkinson himself said that he had sent the images “to educate,” adding “I accept that the documentation was highly distressing. It’s horrendous, monstrous and sickening ... but it represents the truth of what is going on in our world. Everyone in this courtroom knows that abortion is murder and no one has the guts to say it.”

On the basis of the hospital staff’s testimony, Mr. Atkinson was convicted and ordered to serve a month in jail. In sentencing Mr. Atkinson, District Judge Phillip Brown said “It is clear that you intended to shock and I am certain that your purpose was to cause distress and anxiety.”

Somebody ought to tell the BBC, which specializes in broadcasting shocking footage from Iraq intended to cause distress and anxiety among the British public over the British troop deployments there, that these are now punishable offenses in once jolly olde England.

Mr. Atkinson was also fined 500 English pounds in court costs, to be deducted directly from his pension, and given a five-year anti-social behaviour order. Judge Brown warned that disobeying the order would result in five years in jail. In that case, the stalwart Mr. Atkinson replied, “you may as well lock me up and throw away the key.”

He has been punished in other ways as well. The Norfolk hospital boss, Ms. May, struck him off the waiting list for a hip replacement, and now formally denies him all medical treatment save for life-threatening illnesses.

All this for having exercised his right to freedom of speech on behalf of the voiceless unborn.

I have some advice for our English cousins, at least those of the pro-life variety: someone ought to organize a postcard

campaign directed at the offended hospital staff—whose hospital apparently continues to authorize abortions, by the way. Let them complain to the police about the thousands, if not tens of thousands of postcards that they are receiving.

Now is the time to stand with Mr. Atkinson. They can’t arrest you all.

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### SENATE PASSES IMMIGRATION REFORM BILL

(EP)--The Senate passed what is termed a “comprehensive” immigration bill May 25, but some pro-family leaders called their action out of step with conservative thinking.

Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council, said, “It is incomprehensible that those who voted for this legislation are so out of touch with the American people. Voters will not give amnesty to lawmakers who fail to stem the tide of illegal immigration into this country.”

The Senate bill has a guest worker program and provides an accelerated path to citizenship for some currently illegal aliens. In addition the Senate version grants illegal immigrants Social Security benefits and allowing them to receive taxpayer money through the Earned Income Tax Credit. The Heritage Foundation estimates that if the Senate bill becomes law, it could cost up to \$50 billion annually.

A House version of the bill emphasizes border security. Though President Bush had hoped to have a bill on his desk by Memorial Day, it now looks as though it could take weeks to get a compromise hammered out.

The immigration issue came to a head when President Bush addressed the nation May 15 to talk about his plan for deploying more than 5000 National Guard troops along the Mexican border in an attempt to stem the flow of illegal immigrants to the country. He also said that America needed a guest worker program that would put some illegal aliens on a path to citizenship. President Bush’s speech met with mixed reviews from religious conservatives who are themselves divided on the issue.

The Senate worked late into the evening several nights during the week before the Memorial Day holiday to get its version passed.

Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., said the bill would bust the budget, and attempted several parliamentary procedures on May 24 to keep the bill from going forward. Supporters countered that immigrants will be working and contributing more than they will cost. The Sessions effort was defeated 67-31.

However, House Republicans said they would “hold the line” on enforcement provisions of their bill. House Majority Whip Roy Blunt of Missouri said, “The House still continues to feel that securing the border first is the critical priority here. “In fact, if we’re going to move to deal with these other questions, that should happen at a later time after we’ve made some real progress in securing the border.”

As the House and Senate debated respective versions of the immigration bill, the president had his authority challenged on the issue in another way. Fellow Republican and California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger had -- until June 1 -- failed to comply with the Bush’s wishes to be a part of the 5000 person

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National Guard deployment called for in the May 15 speech. However, the stand-off ended with an agreement that California would deploy 1000 troops, but the cost of the deployment would be paid completely by the federal government.

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### FEDERAL JUDGE STRIKES DOWN GAY ADOPTION BAN

(EP)--A federal district judge May 19 struck down Oklahoma's law that prohibits adoption by two people of the same sex. Pro-family experts say the decision could possibly set the stage for the imposition of gay marriage upon states.

In a 31-page decision, U.S. District Judge Robin Cauthron held that Oklahoma's law violated due process and equal-protection rights established by the U.S. Constitution.

"The very fact that the adoptions have occurred," Cauthron wrote, "is evidence that a court of law has found the adoptions to be in the best interests of the children. . . . To now attempt to strip a child of one of his or her parents seems far removed from the statute's purpose and therefore from Defendants' (the state's) asserted important government objective."

The Lambda Legal Foundation challenged the Oklahoma law on behalf of three gay couples, who argued that since they had been given parental rights in other states, the Sooner State should also be forced to recognize their parenthood.

But Bruce Hausknecht, judicial analyst for Focus on the Family Action, said the decision could eventually have dire consequences for traditional marriage because the judge also cited a doctrine called the Full Faith and Credit Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

That clause, found in Article IV, states, "Full faith and credit shall be given in each state to the public acts, recordings and judicial proceedings of every other state."

"What happened in Oklahoma was this federal-court judge overrode the public policy of the state of Oklahoma, and imposed a contrary public policy in favor of gay adoption," Hausknecht said. "This is the case, which if allowed to stand, may eventually bring down traditional marriage."

Prior to this, he said, courts had exempted states from full-faith-and-credit claims if the state was being asked to recognize something it considered illegal.

But if Cauthron's opinion is affirmed by the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, it will go beyond making adoption a constitutionally protected right for homosexuals in Oklahoma -- it could lead to all states being bound to recognize gay adoption. Eventually, gay-activist attorneys would cite the precedent while bringing suits on gay marriage.

"They are laying the foundation," Hausknecht said, "and trying to take out the last obstacle to the gay agenda -- which is traditional marriage."

David Dunn, research and policy director of the Oklahoma Family Policy Council, said the state Legislature had enacted the adoption-invalidity law, because the state was becoming known as a gay-adoption factory.

"In 2004, we became concerned that

Oklahoma was becoming a Mecca for homosexuals," Dunn said. "Homosexuals, who had adopted children in other states, and who apparently weren't able to get birth certificates in those other states, could get Oklahoma to issue certificates showing that the same-sex 'parents' were the parents of the child."

Dunn said this latest decision is all the more reason for Congress to pass -- and send to the states for ratification -- a federal constitutional amendment protecting marriage. "I think the goal of the homosexual activists is to get the courts to invalidate any state law that deals with sexuality," Dunn said, "whether that's adoption laws, or state marriage-protection amendments."

Oklahoma already has a Defense of Marriage Amendment on the books, but Dunn said that's probably not enough protection.

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### PRESIDENT BUSH TO DEPLOY 5000 NATIONAL GUARD TROOPS TO SOUTHERN BORDERS

(EP)--President Bush addressed the nation May 15 to talk about his plan for deploying more than 5000 National Guard troops along the Mexican border in an attempt to stem the flow of illegal immigrants to the country. He also said that America needed a guest worker program that would put some illegal aliens on a path to citizenship.

President Bush's speech met with mixed reviews from religious conservatives who are themselves divided on the issue. Richard Land is president of the Southern Baptists Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. Land supports President Bush and a bipartisan consensus of U.S. senators who are calling for a guest-worker program designed to bring many of the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants out from the shadows and into American society.

However, conservative Colorado Rep. Tom Tancredo criticized Bush's plan as "too little, too late." Tancredo has been outspoken in calling for the securing of U.S. borders and the imposition of severe penalties for those in the country illegally.

Conservative activist Gary Bauer, generally a strong supporter of President Bush, said the feedback he's hearing from conservative activists is "overwhelmingly negative." He said that while conservatives are pleased that the president is doing something about border security, they view the rest of his plan as "dressed up amnesty."

Bauer said "no one is proposing" that the U.S. deport 12 million illegal aliens, but he said that conservative members of the House, who supported a strong "enforcement first" bill last year, remain skeptical.

The president's plan calls for the Guardsmen to be used in supporting roles, and for one year only. According to Bush, the U.S. Border Patrol would continue to be the "front line" of defense at the Mexican border. National Guard troops from the four border states -- California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas -- will make up the bulk of personnel for the mission, but troops from other states would also be deployed as needed. The troops would likely be deployed in groups of about 100 for three-week periods. Most of the jobs would involve transportation, surveillance, logistics, and medical support.

The Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Act has dominated the Senate's activities since the President's speech, with senators on both sides offering amendments.

The Senate voted unanimously in support of an amendment offered by Sen. Jon Kyl (R-AZ) and Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX) to exclude aliens convicted of a felony or three misdemeanors from the bill's amnesty or "adjustment of status" provisions. Conservatives saw this amendment as good news.

Other good news from the conservative's point of view: The Senate approved an amendment by Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL) to build an additional 375-miles of border fencing and 500-miles of vehicle barriers. The vote on the Sessions amendment was 83-to-16, with Democrats providing all 16 "no" votes.

Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) offered an amendment to reduce the number of aliens eligible for the guest worker program from 325,000 to 200,000 annually, and to cap the program at that annual number. The bill originally called for automatic increases each year. The Bingaman amendment passed on a voice vote after opponents failed to table the amendment.

Sen. Cornyn (R-TX) offered another amendment to tighten the rules for guest workers who "self-petition" for permanent resident status. Under the Cornyn amendment, the guest worker must have an offer of employment before he can "self-petition" to remain in the country. The Cornyn amendment passed 50-to-48.

Conservatives saw a few defeats, however. Sen. David Vitter (R-LA) tried to remove the amnesty provisions from the bill, but his amendment failed 33-to-66.

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### SOUTH DAKOTA TURNS FURTHER TO THE RIGHT

(EP)—Earlier this year, South Dakota became the first state in the nation to completely ban abortion. South Dakotans took the movement one step further in elections this week, voting four lawmakers out of office who voted against the abortion ban. They were replaced by strong pro-life politicians. Elli Schwiesow, one of the conservatives elected, is a board member of the South Dakota Family Policy Council, a pro-family group associated with Focus on the Family.

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### IOWA JUDGE ORDERS PRISON FELLOWSHIP TO END SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

(EP)--Prison Fellowship's InnerChange Freedom Initiative (IFI) has been ordered to shut down by an Iowa judge because of its religious content. In a 140-page decision issued this month by U.S. District Judge Robert Pratt in Iowa, Prison Fellowship must shut down its 6-year-old program, currently serving 210 inmates at a prison in Newton, Iowa, within 60 days and return the \$1.5 million it received in government contracts. Prison Fellowship founder Chuck Colson and president Mark Early, a former Virginia attorney general, say they will appeal the decision. The program can continue to operate during the appeals process. However, some damage has already been done. Prison Fellowship has already spent \$1-million on the lawsuit.

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### SAME-SEX MARRIAGE LAW SHUTS DOWN CONSCIENTIOUS ADOPTION AGENCY

(EP)--Those who think the gay marriage debate is "merely" a political issue should consider that Catholic Charities of Boston will shut its doors June 30 rather than be forced by the state to serve homosexual couples seeking to adopt. Each year, between 30 and 40 children are successfully placed in adoptive homes by the group -- more than any other agency in Massachusetts. But state law now requires adoption agencies to place children with same-sex couples. Father J. Bryan Hehir, president of the organization, and Jeffrey Kaneb, the group's chairman, in a joint statement said rather than comply with a law they couldn't agree with, the group would shut down. "We have encountered a dilemma we cannot resolve," they said. "(We cannot) reconcile the teaching of the Church which guides our work and the statutes and regulations of the Commonwealth."

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### BOY SCOUTS WIN VICTORY

(EP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has declined to hear a case brought against the Boy Scouts of America. The father who brought the case objected to the group's presence in public school buildings because of the requirement for members to pledge duty to God. John Scalise argued that in 1998 his then-third-grade son was excluded from the Scouts for refusing to pledge "to do my duty to God and my country." But a Michigan court determined that the Mt. Pleasant school had properly granted equal access to the Scouts, and the pledge to God was not a state-sponsored action. The action by the Supreme Court means the Michigan ruling stands.

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### DEMOCRATIC GOVERNOR WILL SIGN ABORTION BAN

(EP)—The decision by Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco to sign into law legislation that would ban abortion in the Bayou State may signal a turning point in the abortion battle. "I anticipate signing that bill," the Democratic governor told The Associated Press. "It's got a safety measure for extreme situations for the life of the mother and some other health issues." If the Louisiana law goes into effect, any doctor found guilty of performing an illegal abortion would face up to 10 years in prison and up to \$100,000 in fines. The bill, passed by both chambers of the Legislature, is waiting for final Senate approval of minor changes made by the House. "The Legislature has spoken," Blanco said. But most Democratic governors have also spoken -- in favor of abortion. Some pro-life groups say that her decision signals a crack in what had been monolithic support of abortion by the Democratic party.

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### LOUISIANA ABORTION BAN PASSES BOTH CHAMBERS

(EP)--The Louisiana House approved a bill May 31 that would ban nearly all abortions in the state if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned. The vote was 85-17. A similar bill passed the Louisiana Senate in May. The House bill will be returned to the Senate for that body's approval of changes. From there the bill will go to the desk of Gov. Kathleen Blanco.

♦ (Continued on page 378)

# Bible & The Newspaper

(Continued from page 377) ♦

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## SOUTH DAKOTA TRIBE WON'T ALLOW ABORTIONS ON INDIAN LAND

(EP)--The Oglala Sioux Indian Tribal Council voted to emulate South Dakota's abortion ban and forbid the procedure on tribal land. The council also voted to suspend tribal President Cecelia Fire Thunder, who announced plans to open an abortion clinic on the reservation in order to circumvent state law, Keloland.com reported. Tribal lands are sovereign and the state abortion ban would not apply. Sioux tribal law, which respects the life of preborn babies, says "a child conceived, but not born, is to be deemed an existing person so far as may be necessary for its interest and welfare to be protected in the event of its subsequent birth." Will Peters, a representative of the Oglala Tribal Council, said what Fire Thunder did amounts to unauthorized political activity. Peters made a motion to suspend Fire Thunder for 20 days, until an impeachment hearing could occur. -CitizenLink

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## SUPREME COURT DECLINES TO HEAR GAY-ADOPTION CASE

(EP)--The U.S. Supreme Court, for the second time, declined to hear a child-custody case brought by two lesbians, The Associated Press reported. The birth mother, identified only as Sharon S., signed an adoption petition in August of 1999 to allow her then-partner, identified as Annette F., to adopt a child that the two were raising together. The women separated, and Sharon S. tried to request dismissal of the petition. The California Supreme Court ruled the petition was legal and could not be rescinded. Sharon S. then asked the U.S. Supreme Court to hear the case in 2004. The high court declined. She again petitioned the court to hear the case, arguing that it would be a violation of her constitutional rights if an unrelated person were allowed to adopt her child despite her objections. The court declined to intervene.

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## HOUSE PASSES "PET EVACUATION" ACT

(EP)--The House of Representatives voted 349-24 to approve the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act. The bill mandates that state and local agencies draw up evacuation plans accommodating household pets in the event of future disasters. Political activist Gary Bauer called the vote a "a triumph of misguided compassion over common sense." He said, "There aren't 349 members of the House willing to save marriage in America as the union of one man and one woman, but more than three-quarters of our 'representatives' want to make sure we can save Lassie from the next hurricane! Something is amiss."

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## MAJORITY OF AMERICANS OPPOSE GAY MARRIAGE

(EP)--A new Gallup poll found 58 percent of the nation does not believe marriage includes same-sex partners and 50 percent support a constitutional amendment that preserves marriage as the union of one man and one woman. The numbers do show

a distinct divide between Republicans and Democrats: 79 percent of Republicans oppose same-sex marriage and 66 percent of favor a marriage amendment. While 53 percent of Democrats support gay marriage, 55 percent oppose an amendment preserving traditional marriage. Faith plays a factor as well — 51 percent of those who seldom or never attend a religious service oppose same-sex marriage, but 77 percent of those who attend services weekly oppose it.

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## GEORGIANS FIGHT BACK AGAINST JUDGE

(EP)--Democrats and Republicans in Georgia are uniting behind marriage following the actions of a federal district judge who struck down the state's referendum that affirmed marriage. More than 76 percent of 3.2 million voters in 2004 supported traditional marriage. And Georgia became one of more than 35 states to pass some sort of gay-marriage ban. But the judge found the referendum unconstitutional. Gov. Sonny Perdue and the state's Attorney General, Thubert Baker, have asked the Georgia Supreme Court for expedited review. Baker was appointed to his position by then-Gov. Zell Miller, a pro-family Democrat. If the state's Supreme Court fails to act by August 7, the governor has pledged to call a special session of the legislature. This would be necessary so the lawmakers could act to put a new marriage measure on the ballot in time for the November elections. The Secretary of State's legal deadline for qualifying a measure is August 14th. All sides hope to avoid a special session, however, since it costs taxpayers \$30,000 to \$40,000 a day.



# Sinfully Long

(Continued from page 361) ♦

independent fundamental Baptists in this area!

Let me borrow from Brother Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, "**Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me**" (II Cor. 11:1). I am going to write some stupid things to try to say some very serious things: read on, please.

Now Brothers, we are missing out on some good preaching against some sins that even the independent fundamental Baptists have not yet mentioned. Three of these sins are mentioned in the verse at the beginning of this article. Never mind the historical, scriptural setting for this verse, we just want to apply it today. Let us examine these three terrible sins that plague some of our Churches today. These three sins are not usually a problem to younger men or to women at all, but only to older men. First of all we need to warn our Churches and our members about sinfully long eyebrows on men. As men get older, their eyebrows often begin to grow longer and must be shorn else these brothers will be guilty of having long hair! Whether it is on the head or on the face, men must not have long hair! And we must remind our Church members that they must be careful how they remedy this sin. It is, after all, a sin

for a man to allow his eyebrows to be plucked or arched as women do for this is an effeminate act just as effeminate and sinful as using mousse or hair spray or a hair dryer on the hairs of your head! Why I can remember when a man was considered effeminate if he sprayed that sticky stuff on the hairs of his head or dried them with a woman's hairdryer! Listen! We have let some things get by us. We have let some things slip! Many preachers of years gone by preached against men wearing hair oil and they preached against the effeminate, sinful practice of men parting their hair down the middle of their heads as women do. Oh how far we have fallen in our standards on these and other matters! We are allowing effeminate men in our Churches and some of the pastors are involved in these hideous sins!

Now you have to go to the original Hebrew to find the other two sins: you see Strong (good Methodist that he was) in his concordance tells us that the Hebrew for eyebrows is actually two words, one meaning "hair" and the other meaning "protuberances" or "eminant places." So God did not mean just the eyebrows in our text above, but any hairy protuberance that might be found on the face of a man. This brings us to the second sin of older men: long ear-hairs! We just cannot have independent, sovereign grace, landmark, missionary Baptist men running around with sinfully long hairs sticking out of their ears! After all, it is a shame and a sin for men to have long hair! And the other protuberance that can be a source of sin is, of course, the nose and those sinfully long nose-hairs that some brothers sport! We must take a stand against these instances of sinful behavior that are creeping into our Churches! We need to hear fiery sermons in our Churches on these hot topics! Long hair, un-shorn hair, is a sin on a man whether it is on his head or his eyebrows or his ears or his nose!

Some of you may remember a sermon tape that was circulated a few years back. It was a message by the Rev. Doctor G.I. Barber. This man was a genuine authority on the subject of hair, having been a barber in the military and having obtained his Doctor's degree in Hair-ology from Hyles-Anderson College way up north somewhere. He pointed out many good things, and if I remember correctly, he said that it is not the length of the hair only, but also that (1) location, (2) direction and (3) intention are involved. A Baptist preacher can allow the hair on the side of his head to grow to 8 or 10 inches (or more) in length so that if you saw him when he first got out of bed with that long hair down over his collar, you would say that he had sinfully long hair. But if that preacher combs that long hair up, around and over the bald spot on the top of his head, it is not a sin, because that is what some Baptist

preachers do. I'm glad Bro. Barber helped me to understand these important distinctions.

We independent, sovereign grace, landmark, missionary Baptists have a lot to learn from our independent fundamental Baptist neighbors! Before I was scripturally baptized, I fellowshiped with a group of independent fundamental Baptists. I thought myself a Baptist and was received among them as a Baptist. I remember on a couple of occasions meeting a Baptist pastor from a northern state. His church was what I considered to be a large one of at least 400 members. He had "biblical standards of separation" and these were enforced as law in his church. No preacher was allowed to preach in his church if he wore colored shirts, bell-bottomed trousers, wire-rimmed glasses or facial hair of any kind. (Well, he obviously made an exception for eyebrows, ear hair and nose hair, but those issues had not back then been exposed as the great sins that they are!) He said about those preachers who wear cowboy boots, "I wouldn't let a man that wears 'preachin' boots' walk across my platform." He went further — no one could even be a member of his church if they owned or rode a motorcycle! Now this wasn't some cult — this was an independent fundamental Baptist church in America and it may still hold to these "biblical standards of separation" for all I know. Now Brothers and Sisters, we need to move forward in that direction as independent, sovereign grace, landmark, missionary Baptists. We need to take some strong stands against these outward sins. Remember: **"... for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart"** (I Sam. 16:7). God may look on the heart, but man looks on the outward appearance and we need to be concerned about what man sees! After all, that is more important!

Now let me talk to you about a delicate matter. I remember as a boy growing up in eastern Oklahoma that there were some Pentecostal and Holiness churches that taught it was a sin for a woman to shave her legs or under her arms. Now this is an area that our kind of Baptists have not even begun to preach against! Probably we should see to it that the wives of the pastor and deacons be appointed a committee to inspect the legs and underarms of the sisters to see if they are in conformity to the "biblical standards of separation" that our kind of Baptists will maintain if we can get them to take a stand against these kinds of sin. If many of our Baptist Sisters were to visit among the "repenters" ("evangelicals" including Baptists) here in Romania these Romanians would not think that our Baptist sisters are saved. In Romania, Baptist women almost universally wear a

♦ (Continued on page 379)



# Sinfully Long

(Continued from page 378) ♦

headcovering to services, wear absolutely no makeup, wear no jewelry (well, sometimes a plain wedding band and a wristwatch are approved), and in some places, little if anything that might smell of perfume. Such things are regarded as sinful and worldly! Among many of these “repenters” here it is viewed as a sin for ladies to wear high-heeled shoes because such shoes are designed to accentuate the beauty of a woman’s ankles and calves. I have preached in Baptist Union churches here in Romania where the “biblical standard” was that nobody wore jewelry – even wristwatches or wedding rings – and it was regarded as a sin for a man to wear a necktie (because it points to hell). But at the same time, every man who speaks from the platform absolutely must wear a coat! Now these are real standards and we need to fall in line, Brothers! Think of all the services you have been to and never heard a sermon preached against these things!

Upon visiting a few years ago in Siberia I learned that the “Unaffiliated Baptists” (not the Baptists that have recently become fully independent and whom some of our Churches help financially, but the older group) have their own “biblical standards of separation.” I think neckties for men and jewelry are forbidden and I remember for sure that the men must wear a certain style of hat with a specified brim size. Any variation is sinful! Furthermore, “Unaffiliated Baptist” women are prohibited from eating bananas “because of the sexual overtones.” Now we independent, sovereign grace, landmark, missionary Baptists are a long way behind these churches. We need to do some speedy catching up!

I hope you have borne with me a little in this “folly.” Let me lay aside sarcasm and write seriously for a little while, for that is my intention.

I am sure of one thing: men and women of the best intentions are on both “sides” of the separation issues that are in danger of dividing our kind of Baptists! I do not mean to be critical of or to “put down” anyone, but I fear that Christian liberty and love for the Brethren is being lost. When I think how the Lord said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35), I wonder what our testimony is and shall be if our love cannot overlook a Brother’s differences with us on the less weighty matters. Remember Jesus said, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, 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” (Matthew 23:23). A legalistic, hair-splitting attitude (pardon the pun) is an enemy of true spirituality in our Churches. We can become so concerned with the outward appearance that we forget what is truly important and refuse to give a Brother or Sister time to grow in grace and knowledge or to honestly differ with us.

Let me illustrate with this story. A visiting pastor was being shown through the newly constructed auditorium of a Baptist church. As the host pastor was showing him around, they came to the newly purchased organ. The host pastor proudly announced, “We don’t allow any woman who wears trousers to play this organ.” The visiting pastor asked a profound question, I believe, when he said, “Would you allow a woman to play your new organ if she gossiped - maybe just a little?”

Now I am not going to tell you what I believe about women wearing trousers and men wearing kilts, or preachers wearing robes, etc., but I think the following incident speaks volumes to the point I am trying to make in this article. An old preacher friend now in glory told the following story about a Baptist church in which he preached a special meeting. They were a small church and struggling to exist. The pastor took what he believed to be a biblical stand against ladies wearing trousers and some of the members took what they believed to be a biblical stand in favor of allowing women to wear trousers. As a consequence of both parties trying to take a biblical stand, the church split. Now the church was even smaller! One day the deacon’s wife made a remark to the pastor’s wife – she said something about her pajamas. Shocked, the pastor’s wife cried out in horror, “Ahmmmmm, You wear pajamas!” And so the church split again! I think the old preacher was right when he said to that pastor in his best North Carolinian, “It ain’t nobody’s business what my wife wears to bed.”

I remember when more than one Baptist church (not our kind?) had neat little signs on the church doors telling ladies they could not enter if they were wearing trousers! Think about that! Some lost woman who might not have even owned a decent, modest dress and who was ignorant of our super-spiritual “rules” is somehow interested in Christ and the Gospel. She puts on the cleanest and best trousers she owns, walks up on the steps of a Baptist church and there in black and white is told she cannot enter to hear the Word of God preached because her clothing does not meet the “biblical standards of separation” held by that church! Who do we think we are! Listen to me! That lost woman coming into your Church or mine in a pair of trousers is NOT going to hurt you, compromise your spirituality, or ruin your testimony! (It may hurt your

reputation with that bunch of legalistic, self-righteous preachers you run with, but it won’t hurt your testimony – and if you don’t know the difference between your testimony and your reputation with that bunch, you may be beyond help!)

Brothers and Sisters, we better be careful what we do. I know God is sovereign and that all things are accomplished according to His eternal plan – but I also know that God uses means to accomplish His ends and so also does the devil. I am told that the gangster, “Scarface” Al Capone attended for a time a Baptist Sunday school when he was a young boy. He was so badly behaved that the teacher eventually told him to leave and never come back. Say what you will, I would hate to have been that teacher! I know, God evidently never planned the salvation of that gangster, but it was not God that drove him away from hearing the Gospel! Somebody (the devil) used the “means” (that Sunday school teacher) to run Al Capone away from a Baptist Church! Men and women are accountable for their actions, including things they say and do that would hinder people, even children, from hearing the Word of God!

What is the answer? Shall we continue to divide? In doing so we will disrupt the fellowship that exists between our Churches and hinder the work of Churches in missions, publications of papers and books, schools and institutes and other scriptural works because we will not cooperate with those who differ with us on this very weighty matter, i.e. “the length of a man’s eyebrows.” By that I mean that if we find ourselves in disagreement on some of the less weighty matters of the Word of God and we allow these things to hinder the work of God, we are being used as somebody’s means, but I think we are not being used of God. I remember Brother Milburn Cockrell saying to me on more than one occasion that the basis of our cooperation as Churches in various enterprises is based on two things: (1) the doctrine of grace in salvation and (2) church truth. To demand conformity to personal beliefs and preferences so as to make them the basis of fellowship and cooperation is to go beyond the Scriptures.

Consider what the Holy Spirit had to say in Romans 14:1-20: **“HIM that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth**

♦ (Continued on page 380)

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER	
Financial Report	
5-1-2006 to 5-31-2006	
Beginning Balance .....	\$7,521.90

<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL .....	32.49
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	200.00
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 Believers B. C., Naples, ID .....	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV .....	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	125.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay, WV .....	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL .....	25.00
Central Avenue, B.C., Tampa, FL .....	50.00
Eve Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....	200.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR .....	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL .....	25.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK .....	35.00
Hillcrest B. C., Winston-Salem, NC .....	50.00
Indoe B. C., Indore, WV .....	100.00
James Swindell, Russell, KY .....	19.00
Joe Jurzec, Richmond, IL .....	50.00
Landmark M. B.C., Moncks Corner, SC .....	50.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM .....	100.00
Leston Farrell, Des Allemands, LA .....	100.00
Lord’s B.C., Goose Creek, SC .....	100.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM .....	500.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH .....	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN .....	10.00
New Testamant B. C., Goshen, IN .....	50.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA .....	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....	100.00
Rebecca Williamson, Huntingburg, IL .....	15.00
South Park B. C., Seattle, WA .....	25.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS .....	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS .....	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL .....	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC .....	100.00
Timothy Hille, Ashland, IL .....	15.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....	25.00
Wayne Huffman, McNeil, AR .....	140.00
Subscriptions .....	434.00
Anon .....	225.00
Dividing Checks .....	125.00
Sub Total .....	\$4,320.49
TOTAL .....	\$11,842.39

<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Printing .....	634.69
Postage .....	1,035.64
Supplies .....	199.37
Wages .....	2,000.00
FICA .....	168.62
Dividing Checks .....	125.00
Total Expenditures .....	4,163.32
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$7,658.22

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST	
Financial Report	
5-1-2006 to 5-31-2006	

Beginning Balance .....	\$6,386.35
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	125.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	225.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN .....	50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	100.00
.....	500.00
TOTAL .....	6,886.35
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Radio Time .....	400.00
Postage .....	11.45
TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....	411.45
.....	\$6,474.90
Interest .....	+1.22
.....	\$6,476.12
Less Corbin, KY des. ....	-931.52
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$5,544.60

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT	
Beginning Balance .....	\$1,131.52
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
TOTAL .....	1,131.52
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
WCTT .....	200.00
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$931.52



## WORLD SCENE

By G. Russell Evans - Norfolk, Virginia

### Tutu Is Honored Again at William & Mary Graduation



Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize recipient, on May 14, 2006, told the graduating class of the college of William & Mary to become "partners" in creating a "glorious garden blooming with justice and goodness."

God says, "Please help me, please help me, please help me so that we can turn the world into a more gentle and compassionate world," said Tutu, who received the Nobel Peace Prize for helping to lead the struggle against apartheid. "I believe in you. Dream with me. Don't allow the old ones to make cynics of you."

After, Bishop Desmond (Aug. 1986) told the West to "go to Hell." The Anglican Church promoted him to Archbishop of Cape Town, the top church post in southern Africa. But, whatever happened to Jesus' teaching at the Sermon on the Mount: **"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you"** (Matt. 5:44).

Ordinary people have trouble with this wonderful Christian principle. All the same, they expect and deserve better than blasphemous condemnation of western civilization by a church leader--particularly one wearing the mantle of peace with his Nobel Prize while perpetrating violence and bloodshed, and presuming to speak for the blacks of South Africa--which he doesn't.

The leader of the largest church body in South Africa is Bishop Isaac Mokena of the 4 ½ million member Reformed Independent Churches Association. Big media have largely ignored Mokena who supports reform and who recognizes the African National Congress (ANC) for what it is: a ruthless terrorist-promoting organization dedicated to making the country ungovernable in the "transition from Capitalism to Socialism" by revolution.

When Jerry Falwell called the Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg, Desmond Tutu, a "phony" for alleging to represent the blacks of South Africa, the media had screaming ready-made headlines for days on end. The public was not fooled, however. The fact is, Falwell had just spent several days talking with the oppressed people and their leaders in that country, including Chief Buthelezi of the large Zulu tribe. None had designated Tutu as leader or spokesman. Tutu was self-appointed, though certainly enjoying some success in helping quell violence.

Big media revel in such dichotomy. And sure enough, there on public television (C-Span) on the otherwise quiet Friday evening we see a panel of three journalists trying to field questions from a public which

was saying, in essence, "Listen, you are not talking to a bunch of dummies out here." Ninety percent of the questioners criticized the unbalanced slanted reporting.

One questioner, a graduate of the university of Cape Town and part-time president of South Africa for eleven years, told of personal interviews with Tutu who, he said, had been making wild proclamations. He reminded program host, Brian Lamb, that by his count over the past several weeks five in seven callers had vehemently opposed sanctions against South Africa." Then, he asked Kim Willenson, the *Newsweek* journalist with answers for questions not even asked, why the media always viciously attacked religious leaders from the right like Falwell, while universally praising those from the left like Jesse Jackson and Walter Fauntroy who roamed South Africa at will assured of friendly press.

It is easy to criticize, but the truth is the truth and facts are facts. Therefore, what other preacher or leader anywhere equals Falwell's record in establishing and maintaining, among other things: The fastest growing University in America, Liberty University, hundreds of Save-A-Baby homes for unwed mothers who might otherwise abort precious children; the 20,000 member Thomas Road Baptist Church; and a mission in Ethiopia to feed famine victims?

The late Dr. Francis A. Schaeffer said of Falwell's critics, "If you personally do not like some of the details of what he has done, do it better."

On the day he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, October 16, 1984, Bishop Desmond Tutu of the South African Council of Churches was reminded that he had claimed to be a man of peace, but not a pacifist. That means,

said Tutu, "...when people take up arms, I will not condemn them." Moreover, he added, "I would not have been given an award if they thought I was just trying to overthrow a good government."

As Nobel's newest man of peace in 1984 and in the flush of his new acclaim, Bishop Tutu hurried to America where President Reagan gently reminded him of the considerable progress being made in South Africa in race relations, job opportunities and education.

(Portions of this article were from previous articles of Capt. Evans).



## Sinfully Long

(Continued from page 379) ♦

**every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him**

**with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God..."** Surely this portion of the Word of God has much to say not just to the relationships within a Church, but to all of us in our inter-Church fellowship and cooperation. May God help us!



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church formerly of Raleigh, NC has relocated to Wake Forest, NC. Due to their pastor's recent retirement, they are in need of a pastor. Any qualified elder who is interested may contact Bro. Titus Dickerson at 919-570-6178 or contact the church by email at [sovereigngracebaptist@earthlink.net](mailto:sovereigngracebaptist@earthlink.net) or send a resume and statement of beliefs to 601 Woodland Church Rd, Wake Forest, NC 27587.

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The Buffalo Valley Baptist Church, on Triplett Ridge Rd, Clay, WV, will host a revival meeting and week-end conference August 9th - 13th.

Pastor Troy Sheppard of Citrus Missionary Baptist Church, Inverness, FL will be the featured speaker. A number of other ministers from around the country will bring God's Word Friday-Sunday. All are invited to attend.

For further information call Pastor John Pruitt at 304-587-4794 or 304-587-2451.

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Pastor Michael Prater of the Main Street Baptist Church, Burnside, KY has accepted the pastorate of the Landmark Baptist Church, Sacramento, CA. He will assume his new position beginning Sept 1st.

Any true Baptist minister interested in the Burnside pastorate please send a resume and a taped cassette sermon to Eugene Hollis, 3107 Flynn Blvd., Somerset, KY 42501 or phone 606-678-8801.

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