

# The Berea Baptist Banner

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

## How To Get Rich

By Frank B. Beck  
(1921 - 2007)

(Proverbs 3:9-10 - II Corinthians 9)

A lady who refused to give anything after hearing a charity sermon had her pocket picked as she was leaving church. On making the discovery she said, "The parson could not find the way to my pocket, but the Devil did." Now I hope this does not happen to you as you wend your way from this Church service, if I cannot touch your purse. Nevertheless, I am going to speak to you about the least used book in



the Church, the pocketbook!

I wish to show you from God's Word how you can get rich. How your barns can be filled with

plenty, and your vats burst forth with new wine. How you can be prosperous.

**"Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with**

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## The Most Far Reaching Sin Ever Committed

By Roy Mason  
(1894 - 1978)

**Genesis 3:1-7**

Some of you, perhaps have your Bible open to Genesis 3, and I will begin reading with verse 1 and continue through verse 7. **"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman**



**said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is**

**in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; For God doth know that in**

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## Broken on the Stone

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia

**"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits**



**thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him**

**to powder"** (Matt. 21:42-44).

In our text passage, the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking to those

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## God's Golden Chain of Grace

By Milburn R. Cockrell  
(1941 - 2002)

**"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he**



**also glorified"** (Rom. 8:29-30).

A good number of people believe that God should have left these verses of Scripture out of the Bible. Many do not understand them; others just simply do not believe them. Still others seek to

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**He who falls in the dirt, the longer he lies the dirtier he is.**

Quick repentance comes none too soon. This is the mark of a child of God, that he may fall into the mire, but he will not lie there.

**The sheep slips, and is up again:  
the sow lies down and wallows there in.**

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

1. To honor God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To preach the gospel to lost sinners.
3. To spread the whole counsel of God's Word.
4. To encourage God's preachers and to strength-en His churches in the most holy faith.
5. To motivate God's children to a closer fellow-ship 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.

## How To Get Rich

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**plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine**" (Prov. 3:9-10).

### RESPONSIBILITY

There is, of course, responsibility attached to this. We are to **"honour the LORD." "Fear God, and give glory to him"** (Rev. 14:7). **"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"** (I Cor. 10:31). This includes the exercising of our fingers of benevolence! In our giving we are to honor the Lord. **"Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase..."** There is a form of giving that is not honoring to God. On one occasion, a descendant of Nabal, having put a crown piece in the collection plate instead of a penny, stared at its white and precious face, asked to have it back, and was refused by the old Scotch doorkeeper. "In once, in for ever," said he. "Aweel, aweel," grunted the vexed giver, "I will get credit for it in Heaven." "Na, na," replied the pawky doorkeeper, "ye'll get credit only for the penny!" He did not honor Jehovah in his giving.

The reason why we should honor Jehovah, need it be asked?

Consider his character. **"...God is light..."** (I John 1:5). Light is always giving. **"The LORD God is a sun..."** (Psalm 84:11). The sun is always giving its light and warmth and vitality to the earth. **"God is love"** (I John 4:8). Love is always giving. **"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son..."** (John 3:16). And we could go on. God is full of grace to us (I Pet. 5:10). Is not grace always giving, expecting nothing in return? God is full of mercy (II Cor. 1:3). Is not mercy always giving to the undeserving?

Those who by regeneration and sanctification are made like God are also always giving.

Consider God's conduct. Is He not always giving? He gave man this earth to live on (Gen. 1-2). He gives us **"...rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness"** (Acts 14:17). And above all, **"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift"** (II Cor. 9:15) - even His own dear Son! If this same God lives in you He will make you a great giver. **"...Christ liveth in me"** (Gal. 2:20) will also mean, "Christ giveth through me!"

For this reason we should honor Jehovah with our giving.

The requirement of our text should be studied. How shall we honor Jehovah in this particular case? In giving. In giving to Him by purse and by produce. Both.

Some time ago a preacher sent me a pamphlet published by himself in which he seeks to prove that tithing is an Old Testament fixture and has nothing to do with us who are under grace. One of his arguments is that the tithe was never money, but always produce, food, and was always eaten. But here, at least, it appears to be both!

There was the purse. **"Honour the LORD with thy substance..."** According to Dr. Robert Young, the word (hon) means wealth, substance, sufficiency. In the light of the principle of Scripture it would be dishonorable to give God less than one tenth of our income, and certainly no honor if we merely stop at the tenth! **"...He which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully"** (II Cor. 9:6).

The gift of produce is also included. **"...The firstfruits of all thine increase..."** God's preachers and the poor of the flock would have no lack were we quick (in

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# How To Get Rich

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country sections) to give of our milk and meat and other produce to them, as well as tithe our money.

This is our responsibility, to so honor Jehovah in our giving.

## RESULT

The result is that you shall get rich! I am not afraid of God's promises.

It is positive. **"So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."** It is no different than Malachi 3:10, except that the latter reference includes far more than earthly blessing! So shall! But this is in the Old Testament. The blessing of the Old Testament is prosperity, the blessing of the New Testament is adversity. We are living in the New Testament period. Do we not know of Christians who gave and gave beyond their means, like the noble Macedonian Christians (II Cor. 8:1-3)? And they died next to being paupers. How explain?

If you were to ask them: Are you not poor? They would reply: Poor? Not at all! I am a King (Rev. 1:6). I have the **"...unsearchable riches of Christ"** (Eph. 3:8) for I am an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ (Rom. 8:17). But what about the barns and wine-presses the Scriptures speak about in Proverbs 3:9-10?

Surely this refers to provision. Barns filled. Wine-presses bursting. And the Christian giver shakes his head in agreement and says: **"There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken. . .all came to pass"** (Josh. 21:45). My God has supplied all my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19). But it is true that we are living now in the

New Testament age, and much of the carnality and materialism of the Old Testament age and promises now come to us in higher and greater blessing, distilled into spiritual blessings! So that whether I eat or am hungry (as many Christians must be this very hour in distant war-torn and tyrant-ruled lands), yet the promise is fulfilled to them, not in material barns or physical belly, but with the food for the barn of the heart, the Word of God (is that not better yet! Matt. 4:4) and with the blessed wine of Pentecost, the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4 and 13; Eph. 5:18).

But the promise is of plentifulness! Abundance. Barns filled. Vats bursting. Let me point you to the fulfillment. Christ speaks: **"...If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive...)"** (John 7:37-39). While giving is not mentioned here, do not imagine that a stingy, miserly, greedy, covetous person can ever get this blessing.

Now do not go away saying: "I thought he was going to tell us how we could get rich and have well-filled barns and bursting wine-presses, and bulging bank accounts." I have given you something far better. A heart filled with the gladness of God (better than corn and wine in abundance, Psalm 4:7), and bursting forth and overflowing with the life-giving waters and rivers of the Holy Spirit, the wine of Heaven! which cannot be taken away from you. Never! (Luke 10:42).

And then on the "new earth" who can tell about even barns

# Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of  
Caldwell, Kansas



## The New Birth #4

### What is the New Birth?

**"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"** (John 3:3). The new birth is exactly what it sounds like... life created. This time, instead of a physical birth, it is a spiritual birth. When Adam sinned in the garden of Eden he died, not physically, but spiritually. And ever since, man has come into this world spiritually dead. **"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and in sins"** (Eph. 2:1). The old sinful nature cannot be fixed. The nature that you and I were born with is irreconcilable to God. **"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God,**

**neither indeed can be"** (Rom. 8:7). Thus, man must be born again. The new birth is spiritual life granted from above, from God. It is to be alive unto God in Christ Jesus. The new birth is the divine nature of Christ Jesus created in a person. **"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"** (II Cor. 5:17).

The new birth is not a set of morals, a conscience, a moral compass, religion, reformation or a confirmation. It is Christ in us, **"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"** (Gal. 2:20). Have you been born again? Does Jesus Christ live in you?

and wine-presses and houses and land? Be assured, if Proverbs 3:9 and 10 is to receive a literal and physical fulfillment as well, that there will be no better period nor place to receive it than there! Amen.



# The Most Far

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**the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the**

**eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."**

Now some people say, "How could that sin, the eating of fruit, have been so terrible, when it was only the sin of just eating a certain thing?" I am going to say that the sin was not just nibbling some fruit, the sin was in their disobeying Almighty God. Sin is doing what God, our Maker, says do not do, or else refuse to do what He says for us to do. The best indication we have of the origin of sin is the story of how Lucifer became the Devil. That came about by his saying **"I will be like the most high, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God."** We need to get it straight

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as to what sin is. A lot of people leave their relationship to God out completely when they think of sin. A lot of people do not feel that they are sinners---at least not bad sinners---because they are not vilely mistreating their fellow man. They will tell you, "I pay my debts, I try to treat people right, I am a good citizen," but what about their duty to God? Why, they just leave Him out. Such commands as **"Thou shalt have no other gods before me"** and **"Thou shalt love the LORD thy God"** have completely gone unnoticed. Sunday comes, and they do not even think of going to worship. The day begins and they never even think of asking the guidance of God through the day. They bolt food without thanksgiving, and live their lives in the same identical way. God is left completely out. Such a person might treat his fellowman with the utmost consideration, and, indeed, might be voted the community's foremost and most helpful citizen, and at the same time, be utterly Godless, with only his breath keeping him out of torment. Get that notion out of your head, if you have such a notion, that you can be all right spiritually just because you treat your fellowman right. The God that made you, that has given you each breath that you breathe, is due some consideration and some recognition. When you leave Him out, you are going to be left out if you die in that condition. So I say Adam and Eve sinned not just because they nibbled fruit, but because they defied God and did what He told them not to do. But just why do I say that this is the most far-reaching sin ever committed on the earth? I suggest some reasons for this.

In the first place, because it was the first sin. This sin was the start, the genesis, the beginning of sin in this world, and everything that has been wrong since, and is wrong with the world now, harks back to that first sin.

In the second place, because this was the thing that brought death. **"Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world..."** the Bible says, **"And death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned"** (Rom. 5:12). Before that time, there was no death, so far as we know, no death in plant life, no death in animal life, and certainly no death in human life. Every tree that lies dead in the forest, every plant that droops and dies, every death of an animal, fish, or fowl, every death of the human race, stems back to that first sin that brought the curse of death into the world. Every tear that has ever been shed around a death bed, and every pang of grief that has ever been experienced at any funeral, had its origin back there in that first sin.

In the third place, because this was the willful taking of the Devil's word in preference to God's Word. God had said, **"Lest ye die."** The Devil said "not so," and the first woman took his word, and rejected the Word of the One Who had made her. Yes, and the great mass of mankind is taking the Devil's word right now, rather than the Word of God.

In the fourth place, because it was that sin that put us in the condition that we are in today. Adam and Eve fell, and they came to possess fallen natures, they passed those fallen natures on to their children, and they to theirs, and so on until this present day. Every person is born with the nature that has an affinity for sin. There is no denying that. You have to teach a child to do right, you do

not have to teach it to do wrong. As the popular song has it, it does that naturally. Sin springs up in the soil of unregenerate human nature just like weeds spring up in the garden.

In the fifth place, because this was the sin that made necessary the death of Christ, the Son of God. Calvary is the direct aftermath of that fruit-eating episode in the garden and the first promise of a Redeemer appears in this self-same chapter that tells of the fall of Adam and Eve into sin.

But let us ask, what was the father of this first and most far-reaching sin? I answer, it was skepticism. Satan looked down into this glorious little Paradise, and began to figure how he could cause God some trouble. Now, Satan usually works through stooges. The Devil's method is exactly the same as the Communist method, and the Communist way is to bore from within. They get traitors planted on the inside of a country, then when trouble is stirred up, they get those traitors to overthrow and take over. Why does not our government and all others declare Communism to be treason, and every Communist a traitor? That is exactly what they are. Now Satan, looking for a stooge to do his dirty work, chose the most beautiful and intelligent creature in the garden. He chose the serpent, which at that time, was a beast and not a reptile. Let us remember that the serpent was made a snake as a curse from God. In the beginning, he was not a snake, but a beautiful creature that had a power of speech. We have some creatures today that can talk, but they do not have much sense. A parrot is not particularly intelligent, but it can learn to talk. I have heard a talking crow. I had heard of such but I did not believe it. I said, "I will

have to see a talking crow before I will believe it," but I have been thoroughly convinced. Some years ago, I was driving through Bonito Springs, Florida, and saw a small zoo, and I said, "Let us stop and take a look." Well, I was looking at some things shut up in the cages, when I heard a voice right beside me, and I almost jumped out of my skin, for there was not anybody near. I looked down and a crow had his head stuck out of a cage, and he was looking at me with the most mischievous look in his eyes. As I looked, he spoke again, and would you believe it, that scoundrel of a crow stuck his head out to be rubbed. He was perfectly tame and unafraid, and he could say a number of things, and much clearer than the average parrot. Now the serpent there in the garden could not only speak, but he was intelligent, and in him, Satan found the fifth columnist, if I may put it that way, that he needed to undermine the peace and happiness of Eden. Satan, speaking through the serpent, said to the woman, **"Yea, hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"** **"Hath God said"**---are you sure of it? His first weapon was skepticism. The very first thing was to raise the question as to whether or not God had spoken. And, listen, the same old Devil has his modern-day stooges, the modernists, using the same tactics. The first thing they do when a young man goes to the Seminary today is to raise a doubt in his mind as to whether the Bible is really the Word of God, and they water and nourish this seed of doubt, until by the time the young man graduates, he has no authoritative Word of God, and he goes out to poison the minds of those among whom he ministers. I am going to tell you, from now on,

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# WATERING THE TULIPS



By Todd Bryant  
of  
Northport, Alabama



## Shining Lights In A Dark World

**"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"** (Matt. 5:14-16).

Everything you do is under the world's microscope. Like it or not, this is true. Never has every move a person made been more viewable as today. From mobile phone cameras to social media, nobody is truly hidden from the world's site anymore. There is no closet to retreat into. Certainly **"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good"** (Prov. 15:3). However, there is just about a camera and outlet to post on social media in every place today, as well. We must always keep in mind that God is Judge and we must give an account to Him. We must also keep in mind that we are to show good works before the world—works that honor and glorify our Father in Heaven.

The world has defined the "seven deadly sins" as lust, gluttony, greed, laziness, wrath, envy and pride." Certainly those

are sins and we often fall into their trap. Yet, God has a list of seven abominations that differs some from this list. **"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren"** (Prov. 6:16-19). Though we all have our "pet peeve sins," this is a list of sins that God inspired to declare that He hates. We would do well to memorize this list and steer away from these tendencies. The world is watching to see how we act.

We must wonder how well we are truly doing at letting our light shine before the world. In this day when every thought seems to make its way into a Tweet or Facebook post, I am not sure we consider how we must look to the lost world amidst all of the drama that this world supplies us daily. Do we stand out as different? Or, do we seem to have the same worldly tendencies as everybody else? Do we stand out as repentant? Or, do we continue daily to spew venom on social media only to bow our heads in prayer at church on Sunday morning? Do we let our light shine before men? Or, do we continually add fuel to the fire in what we say and do? These are legitimate questions that need to be asked.

When a believer supports a cause, the world views Christianity through the actions of that believer. Like it or not, you may be the only contact your friends and family have with the cause of Christ. How are you doing? Is your normal speech just like theirs? Or better yet, is it any different from when the Lord

saved you? Is your support of those causes and leaders showing your faith in God? Or are your causes and candidates just worldly and wicked like the world's causes and candidates?

Child of God, you are to be a light in this world. While the world is dark, you are to shine. If we are wrapped up in the same fights as the world, the likelihood is that we are not shining as we should. May God lead us all to shine forth for Him in this dark day of the world's history.



## The Most Far

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I am going to advise every student for the ministry that I come in contact with to stay away from any and every institution that has even a suspicion of modernism.

In the next place, note that Satan's skepticism questioned God's goodness. **"...Hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree..."** The plain inference was that God was holding out on them, was keeping the best from them. And the Devil still sows that kind of stuff in human hearts. I have had people come to me and say, "If I become a Christian, will I have to give up such and such pleasures?" That comes because the Devil gets people to believing that he offers a better time than God, that God is holding out on people, keeping them from having as good a time as they ought to have. It is strange, but the human race has not found out during all these many centuries that the Devil's good times are ruinous and destructive of all happiness and everything that is worth while. Many a man can not see why the Lord should object to his smoking or his taking a drink or his gambling a little. Many a woman can not see why

the Lord should object to her winning a good little prize at the bridge table, or wearing clothing that renders her half naked. Many a young person can not see why the Lord should object to their doing this, that, or the other. Why does God want to take our pleasures from us? Why does He want to put a hedge around those trees from which we fain would eat. Well, maybe I can make you see with some illustrations. My father had some cows on his farm up in Kentucky, and those cows were allowed in a nice green meadow. The grazing was splendid in the meadow, and the cows did not lack for food, for they were sleek and fat. But right on the border of the meadow, in the center of the farm, he had a fine field of corn. Round the field of corn he had a fence, an old-fashioned rail fence. The corn had developed to the stage where there were green ears of corn on the stalks. I can imagine one of those cows standing by the fence looking over into the green field, and I can imagine her saying in cow language to the rest, "Is it not awful that the master keeps that nice corn field away from us? He is holding out on us. He is keeping us from having a good time." And all the cows come to resent the restriction, and they begin to push against the fence. Finally, it gives away in one place, and the whole bunch of them go over into the corn field, and begin to feast on green corn. Now I am just imagining that conversation in cow language, of course, but I am not imagining that intence of the cows breaking into the corn field, for my father's cows did that very thing. They broke in during the night, and when he went out in the morning, those cows had stuffed themselves on all the green corn they could hold. It had

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# The Most Far

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tasted good, but in the language of the farm, they had foundered on green corn. What a fix they were in! Those animals puffed up and looked as if they would burst. Despite everything that could be done, some died, and the rest were the sickest beasts I think I have ever seen. As I recall, part of the hair came off of them, they could not eat, and they came out of that experience poor and emaciated, and looking like walking skeletons. If they had possessed intelligence, I fancy they would have admitted that the restrictions of their master were designed for their good, and that their violation of that restriction had worked them harm. I think of a friend who told of receiving quite a lot of candy at Christmas time, and the small boys consumed a plentiful amount of it, but they were not satisfied. They wanted more! And when they were finally sent upstairs to bed at night, they went crying, feeling, no doubt, that they had very unkind parents---parents who had pounds of candy and would not let them eat another bite. Suppose they had let those boys go unrestrained? Before morning, they would have been sick as those cows that broke into the corn field. Why did those parents hold back that candy from those boys? Because they did not want those boys to have a good time? No! No, because they had the welfare of those boys at heart, and that is exactly the why of God's restrictions. God never keeps anything from you, or never takes anything away from you, but that it is for your good. The very fact that you like something does not prove that it is good for you. It looks as if we human beings could learn some sense from Eve's experience, and the experience of

others that have been violating the will of God down through the centuries, but sad to say, we have not learned very much.

I said that skepticism followed that first and most far-reaching of all sins back there in the garden---first, skepticism concerning whether God had really spoken or not. **"...Yea, hath God said...?"** And second, skepticism concerning the goodness of God. "Hath God said that you shall not eat of the fruit of every tree of the garden? He just wanted to keep something delightful from you. Go ahead and enjoy it."

Now, third, we see skepticism concerning God's truthfulness. The serpent said to the woman, **"...Ye shall not surely die...."** Listen, the same Devil puts the same sort of denial in the minds of people today. All over the country there are people who tell you that they do not believe the Bible, they do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and especially they do not believe in Hell. Most, if not all, that say such have never read the Bible completely through. Think of it, will you? Think of a man who has been in the world just a few years, who has only touched an infinitesimal part of the universe, who has learned only a primer or two of all the works of wisdom---think of that man setting himself up to dispute with God, God Who made the world, and without Whom there was not anything made that was made. I believe that such has only one explanation. Eve would never have done this on her own accord. She knew too little to dare make such an assertion, to dare to call God a liar. A man today would never of his own accord say that there was no Hell, when God says there is. A man confined to this little earth would never, on his own, say that out in the vast universe there is no place

of punishment for sinners. I will tell you why Eve believed as she did, why men deny Hell as they do---it is the whispering of the archenemy of God, Satan, as he opposes God and seeks the ruin of our souls. Back there, God said to the first man and first woman, **"...The day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."** Satan said, **"...Ye shalt not surely die."** Who was right? Ask Adam, after he had been cast out of the garden, ask him as he toils out there amid the thorns and thistles, and he will tell you that God was right. Ask Eve as she views the angel with the flaming sword, keeping her forever from going back into the garden, who was right, and she will tell you that God was right. Ask Adam and Eve as they lie in their last sickness ready to shuffle off this mortal coil, who was right, God or Satan, and they will tell you that God is right. You say, "But they did not die when they ate the forbidden fruit." That is where you are wrong. The most awful thing about death is separation, the most awful thing about the second death is eternal separation from God and happiness. The every day that they ate the forbidden fruit, they separated themselves from God, they lost their fellowship with Him, and they showed it by hiding from Him in the garden, and that very day, the process of disintegration and decay set in that eventually put them in the grave. Listen, the same God Who said, **"Ye shall surely die"** has also said, **"The wages of sin is death,"** and by death there He does not primarily mean physical death, but spiritual, eternal death. If we have learned anything from the experience of our first parents there in the garden, we will believe that God means what He says, **"The wages of sin is death."** A fellow gets wages for serving the

Devil. Payday comes as surely as time goes on.

But suppose somebody asks me, "What can I do---I have already served the Devil for years, and I have enough of the wages of sin laid up to take me to Hell the minute I die?" I am glad that I have the answer to that question. When Eve had disobeyed the Lord and had been put out of the garden, was there any remedy? Yes, God right there made the first promise of a Redeemer, promising that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. I believe that Adam and Eve believed the promise of God. I believe that they looked forward and believed on the Redeemer to come and were saved. When I get to Heaven, I am expecting to see both Adam and Eve there. But I have something more than the promise of a Redeemer. I have something more than that, for I come to tell you that that Redeemer has actually come. He came to take the load of sin that men have piled up against themselves, and to give unto those that believe on Him a priceless gift, the gift of everlasting life, for the Bible not only says, **"...The wages of sin is death,"** it also says that **"...the (free) gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord"** (Rom. 6:23). The old prophet Isaiah says, **"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"** (Isa. 53:6). Are you willing that your sins should be laid on Him? That is what faith in Him is, an expression of willingness to receive Him as your sin-bearer. It says here in this Scripture, **"To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission**

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## Selah! Think about it!

by Matthew Stepp  
of Wayne, West Virginia

**"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"** (I Thess. 4:16-17).

During a recent revival service at Big Creek Baptist Church, the LORD blessed the sermons and the singing and as pastor, I stood up at the end of the service and told the congregation that I was really expecting the roof of the building to disappear in the glory of the coming of Jesus Christ. Wow! raptured to **“.ever be with the LORD!”** Knowing that it could happen at any moment means we are living in expectation that it REALLY could happen during one of our worship services. Getting caught up in that REALITY, I mentioned to the congregation that I really did not know what the Wayne County Sheriff would do with all those cars left in the parking lot. Selah! Think about it!

Sure is a joyful thought, eh? But after the service, I got to thinking that there were more than just empty automobiles being left in the parking lot. What about the 3-4 (8-10?) empty souls left in the Big Creek sanctuary? Those without the blessed hope that comes through the shed blood of Jesus Christ that are left there suddenly in the mostly emptied building? Life will go on. What would they be thinking as

they turned out the lights and wandered into the parking lot to get into their cars? Selah! Think about it!

The modern Arminian, that writes the "Left Behind" series of prophetic books, would see those remaining souls saved by the evidence experienced by their wondering eyes. But, beloved reader, I am afraid the Bible does not back that theory up. In the context of the rapture, the Apostle Paul writes, **"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness"** (II Thess. 2:10-12). Beloved, the Bible is clear that the Great Tribulation is Daniel's Seventieth Week, where God is going to deal virtually exclusively with the nation of Israel and the time of the Gentiles is OVER, as the Rapture concludes the Church Age. **"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in"** (Rom. 11:25).

And, now, as the roof literally comes off the Big Creek Baptist Church, "blindness" will come upon those souls left in the pews as the piano stops abruptly because the trumpet has sounded. Unbelievable you say? **"NO ONE** in their right mind could misinterpret the disappearance of all the Christians in the world?" Again, let me revisit the depths of the total depravity of the human mind. What happened when Jesus

raised Lazarus from the DEAD? **"Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done"** (John 11:45-46). Some of those witnesses to the UNBELIEVABLE event of calling a dead man out of his tomb, went to the Pharisees and told them, "You are never gonna believe what the Nazarene has done now." Never minding the miracle, the evident signs of deity—they did not believe. Just as Abraham answered the rich man's request to send the other Lazarus back from the dead to warn his earthly, carnal brothers of their imminent fate, **"And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead"** (Luke 16:31). Selah! Think about it!

The power is in the preaching. The foolishness of preaching is the ONLY hope that those few remaining souls in the sanctuary had. Had? How terrible to end up on the wrong side of the Rapture. But let me ask you something, beloved reader. Do those poor souls "left behind" have ANY more evidence the moment AFTER the Rapture, than they did the moment BEFORE? Did the preacher not warn them? Was that not the whole purpose of the revival meeting? Had it not been laid out before them in detail in the Word of God? The evidence was just as "sure" when the Apostles wrote the New Testament as it will be "sure" for all of eternity. And they still won't believe, unless they believe the Gospel. **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the**

**Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith"** (Rom. 1:16-17).

Beloved reader, this is all written that you might see "what could have happened." The Rapture HAS NOT occurred, as of yet. I am still able to type these words of warning to lost sinners. The Bible says that NOW is the day of salvation. NOW is the time to believe. **"(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation)"** (II Cor. 6:2). Selah! Think about it!



## The Most Far

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**of sins"** (Act 10:43). Have you ever believed on Him in that way? That is the only way out, that is the only solution to any person's sin problem. Why do you not take it? Will you take it, and then will you say so in open, public profession of your faith in Christ?

Our Heavenly Father, we pray that we may learn some lessons from these ancestors of ours of the past, and we pray that we may realize that men apart from God's redemptive grace, are mere children of fallen Adam. Grant, our Heavenly Father, that if we have been speaking to some out of Christ, that they may realize God's remedy for sin---His Son---and that they may turn unto Him as that remedy, receiving Him as their personal Savior, for we ask it earnestly in His name, and for His sake. Amen.





# Broken on the Stone

(Continued from page 1) ♦

Jews who have rejected Him and His ministry – and who, in doing so, have rejected God the Father Who sent Jesus Christ into the world. In particular, Jesus Christ is speaking to the chief priests, the elders, and the Pharisees, who have been questioning Him and His authority. I want you to know, that it is a dangerous thing to question Jesus Christ or His authority! In doing so, as men of this world, we are in danger of bringing immediate judgment upon ourselves; and, if we do not repent, we are only pouring additional and terrible damnations upon us which shall be poured out upon us by the justice of God in the eternal Lake of Fire.

A portion of our text passage is a direct quote from a Psalm, which is considered by most to be a Messianic Psalm: **“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD’S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes”** (Ps. 118:22-23). The teaching of the Psalm informs us that the Lord Jesus Christ never expected to be accepted and lauded by the **“builders”** who would be the leaders and the rulers of the people that He would come to minister unto. However, is it not a marvelous thing that men would reject their own Creator when He would take upon Him flesh, and would inhabit the same place and time as the men whom He had created? Is it not a further marvelous thing, that the very **“stone”** which was the Christ and the Creator, though He was rejected and refused by the educated and the elite of men, was still – despite all of their opposition, and despite all of their

earthly wisdom – made the chief cornerstone of the work and the prosperity of the Lord God as He dealt with all of mankind? It is marvelous to my eyes – and to yours as well, if you are saved – that the Lord Jesus Christ, Who was rejected by men during His first coming, is the only hope and the only salvation for all of mankind. Without Him, men cannot be saved. And yet, in His presence, nearly all would ignore Him or even violently oppose Him. Today, let us thank God for His mercy and for His long-suffering and for His salvation, which is accomplished through our blessed and persecuted and reviled – yet beautiful and glorious, Saviour, Jesus Christ.

## THE STONE

In our text verses, there is a reference to a stone which is rejected by the builders. This stone would become the head of the corner. This is obviously a reference to Jesus Christ. Peter made this fact plain when he told the Jewish leaders, **“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”** (Acts 4:10-12).

Jesus Christ is the **“head of the corner.”** He is the cornerstone of the kingdom of God. Jesus Christ is the **“rock”** upon which the Church is built. **“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates**

**of hell shall not prevail against it”** (Matt. 16:18). Jesus Christ was not hesitant or lax in taking the Old Testament prophecies of Himself and relating them to the current conditions as He ministered to the people, and as He taught the ones who were (or would become) the children of God.

John Gill said, “Christ is often in Scripture compared to a stone, and is called the stone of Israel is said to be a stone of stumbling to some, and a precious tried stone to others: is represented as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and on which are seven eyes: and is fitly compared to one, for his usefulness in the spiritual building the church, where he is as both the foundation and corner stone, and for his strength and duration. Christ is the sure, firm, and everlasting foundation, which God has laid in Zion, and the only one of any avail; nor can any other be laid to any purpose; and if he is neglected, and laid aside in the ministration of the word, the building which men endeavour to rear, or exhort unto, will come to nothing. Whoever build on him are safe, and on nothing else: Christ is the foundation on which the church and every believer are built, and therefore will abide; for the gates of hell cannot prevail against them: the covenant of grace is immovable, being established in him; its mercies are sure, and its promises yea and amen: the salvation of immortal souls is certain, resting upon him; the faith and hope of the saints fail not, being directed to, and settled on him: the house not made with hands, which is in heaven, is an eternal one; and the city which has foundations is a continuing one because of the concern that Christ has in it; and though he is of such eminent use

and importance in the building, yet, as such, the “builders rejected” him.”

The Old Testament is full of prophecies, which picture Jesus Christ, the Messiah, as a “stone.” **“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste”** (Isa. 28:16). In the book of Daniel, we read about a dream that Nebuchadnezzar had, and Daniels’ interpretation of that dream. In that dream there is a stone, which is representative of Christ and His kingdom (See Daniel 2:31-45). We read in the book of Zechariah, **“Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day”** (Zech. 3:8-9).

The idea of Christ as a strong, immovable stone; the concept of Christ as a foundation upon which a structure is built; the thought of Christ as the center and the focus of our hope and our salvation – a center and a hope that cannot be moved – is something that is key in representing the true characteristics, and the Heavenly and eternal nature of our God and Saviour. These Old Testament prophecies do a good job of painting the picture; Jesus Christ came to fill in the details, and to embody the prophecies in a full and perfect way. This is why He, Himself, makes reference to the passage from the Psalms;

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# Broken on the Stone

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He understands that He is the “stone,” and He intends that the Jews, and others, should see Him in the prophecies.

As we go further in the sermon, I want you to notice that this “stone” has the ability and the authority to both “break” the sinners, and to grind the sinners to “powder.” But, first, let us notice the “builders” who are mentioned in reference to the “stone.”

## THE BUILDERS

By the “builders,” the Jewish teachers and the Jewish leaders are intended. These are the ones who, in the past, had been leading the people to look for a physical and mortal salvation – obtained by a physical and mortal Messiah. The Jews were the ones that the Christ came to first. The Jewish nation is the people, and this generation that He lived amongst were the generation, who would first be the recipients of the ministry of the Christ Who would save the world. However, these same leaders and rulers which now were in charge of the Jewish people, were the ones who were for the most part, even now, rejecting Jesus as the Christ, and refusing to submit to the authority which He so obviously retained. They were only looking for a physical salvation and a physical kingdom. Their worship and their religion was only a temporal worship and religion.

In the text passage, the Lord Jesus Christ told the Jews, “**The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.**” The

implication is that the Jews were exposed to the Kingdom of God first, in the New Testament Age, through the preaching of John the Baptist (see Matthew 3:1-2) and Jesus Christ (see Matthew 4:17). And yet, due to the response of the worldly Jews – especially their blind leaders – the Kingdom of God, and the successes of that Kingdom, would be given to others. Now, this could apply both to the fact that the highly esteemed Jewish leaders – scribe, Pharisees, lawyers, priests, and rulers – would be omitted from the Kingdom of God, while the poor and the ignorant and the sinners would be included in that Kingdom; and the fact that the Jewish nation as a whole, would be largely omitted from the Kingdom of God for centuries, and the benefits of that Kingdom of God on earth would be mainly experienced by the Gentiles.

The Jewish leaders – the scribes, the Pharisees, the lawyers, and the chief priests – were all about control. They wanted to teach and build the religious exercises of the Jews. They designed these to emphasize the importance of man, and, for the most part, they focused on the works, the abilities, and the obedience of men, in order to accomplish salvation and effective service unto God. The foundation that they built upon was only sand – it was comprised of the works and the worth of men.

These “builders” who were in charge of the moral direction and the religious endeavors of an entire nation and religion, not only missed or ignored the coming of the Messiah; but, they even went so far as to seek to discredit Him and to set Him “at nought.” **“And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and**

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## Quotes from Brother Ritechus N. Dignation

by Joseph Harris

### HOW TO HIRE A PREACHER AT WAL-MART

When it comes to “hiring” a preacher, certain qualifications usually come to mind. Education, experience, and family status are just a few of the criteria often used to measure the candidate. Some people are concerned with age: he may be too young or he may be too old. Still, others don’t want a boring, teaching preacher, but a dynamic, flamboyant pulpiter.

I have decided that a lot of churches miss the boat when calling a pastor. Being Spirit led, with a good dose of common sense, guided by Scripture is always the best rule of thumb in every situation. Churches could learn a thing or two about calling a pastor if they would just put aside the resume, references, and education of the candidate and consider another avenue. Instead of sending a pulpit committee to hear the preacher in his own church where he will always be on good behavior, let the committee instead follow him around town for a day and observe his shopping habits and people skills in everyday life situations. This is where the real man and his character (or lack of it) will be revealed. Consider the following when at Wal-Mart:

(1) When taking a buggy through the check out, does he stick to the maximum item limit in the express lane, or try to bulldoze his way through an express lane with a buggy of 50 items, ignoring the 20 item limit?

Character Trait - Obeys rules. If he ignores the sign, it means he doesn’t obey rules and submit to authority. So then does he follow God’s rules and submit to His authority?

(2) When taking groceries or other items to his car in the parking lot, does he go out of the way to place his cart in the shopping cart return rack, or “do what everyone else does” and leave it by his car? Character Trait - Goes the second mile. If so, then he will probably work hard and not be slack in his ministry work as your pastor.

(3) When walking down the aisle in the store, does he stop and pick up stray items on the floor and put them back on the shelf or out of the way of traffic? Character Trait- Consideration and being a good steward. He is considering the safety of other shoppers and helping the store keep items from being destroyed and shop worn.

(4) Is he courteous with other shoppers and workers in the store, including the checkout person? Character Traits-Grace and compassion. If he is rude, pushy, arrogant, and impatient, then he lacks graciousness and compassion and will probably give his church members the same treatment.

(5) Does he park in the handicap spot because, after all, it’s empty? Character Trait-Sensitivity. This one speaks for itself. If he is insensitive to the needs of others, he is placing his needs first. Need I say more?

Actually these standards would apply when calling a pastor, hiring an employee in business, or looking for a husband or wife. Be careful. You never know who may be watching you in public.

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**restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought**” (Mark 9:12). **“But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him”** (Ps. 22:6-8).

Sadly, this is still the state of affairs in religion today. Truly, the unbelieving Jews of today have continued in the paths and the pattern set by these unbelieving Jews in the time of Christ. However, even in the ranks of so-called Christianity, there are builders – the leaders and the teachers in main-stream Christianity – who are building their religion and their salvation upon a sandy foundation, and are concentrating on works and the worth of man, when they should be proclaiming the works and the worth of Christ. In their own ways, the leaders of religion today are, for the most part, rejecting the **“Stone”** which is Jesus Christ. John Gill said, “And so he is rejected by some who bear the characters of builders among Christians: as when his proper deity, and eternal sonship are denied, and he is treated as a mere creature; when his satisfaction and atoning sacrifice are either wholly rejected, or little regarded, lessened, and depreciated, and repentance and good works are put in the room of them; when his imputed righteousness is opposed, and laid aside, and the righteousness of men preferred unto it, and cried up as the matter of justification

in the sight of God; when his efficacious grace is represented as unnecessary to regeneration, conversion, and sanctification, and to the performance of good works; and when he is left out of public ministrations, as the way of life and salvation, as the fountain of all grace, and foundation of all happiness, and human power, free will, and moral righteousness are put in his room.”

## THE BROKEN

As we return to our text passage, it is interesting to note that the **“stone”** breaks some, and reduces others to powder. Very often we are inclined to break these two classes of persons pictured here, into the class of saved, and the class of the unsaved. However, I believe that the **“broken”** is a reference to those who are guilty of sin, and who have offended God and His Saviour, Jesus Christ.

In a general way, we might say that the **“broken”** referred to in our text passage, could be inclusive of all men – for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. We have all been an offense to God, and have stumbled at that stumbling stone which is Jesus Christ. **“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed”** (I Pet. 2:6-8). We all are born sinners. We all have been disobedient. We all have transgressed the law of God. There is none of us who are

naturally pure, who are naturally right and just. There are none of us who are naturally whole and unblemished. We are all guilty and broken creatures in the sight of a thrice holy God.

However, there is the grace of God intervening on behalf of miserable and broken mankind. There is salvation for those who are ordained unto eternal life. Those of us who are saved are made to know our broken and sinful condition, and we look to Jesus Christ as our Saviour and as the remedy for our broken condition. Once this condition is seen and repentance is granted and belief in Jesus Christ is delivered to them, these formerly **“broken”** souls will be saved by God’s grace. It must be that those who will be saved will, at one time or another, as a preface to their salvation, be reduced to such a situation as this: broken and condemned because of their sinfulness and their depravity. This **“broken”** condition of men who have transgressed against the Lord God of Heaven and Earth, is the **“broken”** condition that is likely being referred to by our Lord Jesus Christ. John Gill said, “..but whilst there is life, the means of grace continue, the kingdom of God is not taken away; there is hope that such may be recovered from their impenitence and unbelief.”

**“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise”** (Ps. 51:17). The verses in the Psalms – and there are several – which refer to the **“broken heart”** or the **“broken spirit”** as being necessary in the cause and service of God, are really a condition that one comes to, after having been broken and condemned – after having been known and cast down as a terrible

sinner, and an offender of the Law and Justice of God – after having trusted in God as the Saviour. These verses are not necessarily speaking of the initial salvation of a soul; but, rather, of the times of sin and the times of failure in our service unto God. At such times we must confess our sins and turn unto Him Who has saved us. **“He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds”** (Ps. 147:3).

We read in the book of Isaiah, **“Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken”** (Isa. 8:13-15). Matthew Henry said, “Some, through ignorance, stumble at Christ in his estate of humiliation; when this Stone lies on the earth, where the builders threw it, they, through their blindness and carelessness, fall on it, fall over it, and they shall be broken. The offence they take at Christ will not hurt him, any more than he that stumbles, hurts the stone he stumbles at; but it will hurt themselves; they will fall, and be broken, and snared, Isa 8:14; 1Pet 2:7; 1Pet 2:8. The unbelief of sinners will be their ruin.”

## THE POWDER

Finally, I want you to consider the condition of those who are ground to **“powder”** in our text passage. We might say that those who are broken, and who never repent and believe in Jesus Christ as their Saviour, are bound to be ground to powder. I suppose that you could say that this **“powder”**

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represents those persons who are so actively opposed to Jesus Christ and to His ministry, that they are destroyed outright, and they are exceedingly damned and destroyed by the Justice of God. These are those persons who will persistently, continuously, and vigorously attack the Lord Jesus Christ and His followers. These are those persons who will, despite all evidence to the contrary, refute and refuse Jesus Christ and His words and works, and who will intentionally deceive and blind others so that they may not follow after Jesus Christ. These are those souls who will do their best – after the powers of the flesh and the evil spirit world – to prevent and oppose those who are seeking to enter in at that straight gate and to travel the way to Heaven. The end of these wicked persons is to be utterly ruined, and to be ground into “**powder.**” We read in the Psalms, “**The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries**” (Ps. 110:5-6).

I believe that many of the “**builders**” which are referred to in our text passage, will be amongst these that are ground to powder. Although, in a beautiful manifestation of God’s mercy and grace, we do find that quite a number of the priests and others who may have persecuted Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry, were saved after that the Lord was ascended into Heaven: “**And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the**

**priests were obedient to the faith**” (Acts 6:7). The Apostle Paul is an example of another terrible persecutor of the faith, who was also saved. The Apostle Paul did not just reject Jesus as the Christ, he violently opposed Him, and sought to imprison and murder those who would follow Jesus Christ. And yet, the Lord saved him. “**And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting**” (I Tim. 1:12-16). He was broken on the stone, in that he was found a sinner. He was worthy to be ground into powder, in that he violently and vehemently opposed the Kingdom of God. But, the Lord was gracious unto Him, and He granted him repentance and belief in Jesus as the Christ. And, the Lord has been gracious to many more. However, all of those who will violently and continually oppose the Kingdom of God, and who will do so all of their days without repentance, these will be utterly and terribly damned. Matthew Henry said, “None ever hardened his heart against God and prospered.”

I pray God that you and I will resolve to follow after Jesus

Christ. He is the Stone which the builders rejected. However, He is also the Stone which is tried and true, and which is set for the fall and the rising again of many. He is our hope and our salvation. The world may revile Him, and may even persecute us. But let us not forsake Him or His Word.



## God’s Golden

(Continued from page 1) ♦

explain away their plain sense in order to cling to their religious dogma. These verses are in the Bible, and they are profitable for doctrine. They contain five great words which progressively reveal the footsteps of redeeming grace.

### FOREKNOWLEDGE

The first link in this golden chain of grace is the foreknowledge of God the Father: “**For whom he did foreknow....**” The word “foreknow” is *proginosko* in the Greek, and it means *pro* or “before,” and *ginosko* or “to know.” Hence the word means to know beforehand. This word is used in two ways in the New Testament.

First, it means God’s knowledge of all things before they come into existence. This cannot be the meaning here in Romans 8:29, for foreknowledge concerns persons to be conformed to the image of Christ. These particular persons are to be called, justified, and glorified by God. This is not true of all men without exception.

Second, it points to an act of the Divine intelligence which includes affection and choice. This is a voluntary act on the part of God. It means God chose and recognized as His own. “**For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous...**” (Ps. 1:6). “**You only have I known of all the families of the earth...**” (Amos 3:2). “**...I am the good shepherd, and**

**know my sheep...**” (John 10:14). “**The Lord knoweth them that are his...**” (II Tim. 2:19). At the white throne of judgment Christ will say to hypocrites: “**...I never knew you**” (Matt. 7:23). Christ certainly knew their character and actions, but He did not ever love and choose them as His people.

Thus in Romans 8:29 foreknow is the act of knowing and fixing the mind upon a number of persons whom God would predestinate. It points to those the apostle calls “**God’s elect**” in verse 33 of this same chapter of Romans. Foreknowledge corresponds with the choosing before the foundation of the world in Ephesians 1:4. The foreknowledge in my text prevents reprobation: “**God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew...**” (Rom. 11:2). In I Peter 1:2 foreknowledge and election are joined together. God the Father had a knowledge and delight in certain persons, and this is the ground and foundation of His electing them in eternity past.

Heretics, past and present, add to these words and make them read: “Who God knew beforehand as certain to believe.” Paul added no such words, nor are such words at all necessary. To add such words would be to completely reverse the sense of Paul, and ascribe the choice to the clay instead of the Potter. Jesus said: “**Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you...**” (John 15:16). God foreknew man in unbelief (Rom. 11:32), not in belief. Faith cannot be the cause of foreknowledge because foreknowledge precedes predestination, and faith is the effect of predestination: “**...And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed**” (Acts 13:48). Hence foreknowledge in Romans 8:29

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## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

*Submit your questions on any Bible topic.*

1. Are the Mennonites a true New Testament church as described in Acts 2? - Idaho

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No, they are not a true New Testament Baptist church. Named after and influenced by the teachings and tradition of Menno Simons (1496-1561) their founder, not Jesus Christ. In my book that is the first strike against them.

They believe one can be baptized by the act of immersion, sprinkling, or pouring water from a pitcher, second strike against them.

They believe all Christians are the church, the body of Christ, third strike against them. In other words, three strikes and they are OUT!

They believe in feet washing which was never given by Christ as an ordinance. And they are not all in agreement in their doctrinal belief, much like the cult called the Amish. Below is a quote from an internet web site:

"Who are the Mennonites and what are their beliefs?"

There is a wide scope of worship, doctrine and traditions among Mennonites today. Old Order Mennonites use horse and buggy for transportation and speak Pennsylvania Dutch (similar to German). They refuse to participate in politics and other so-called "sins of the world." Most Old Order groups also school

their children in church-operated schools. Traditionally, they used horses to pull the farm equipment, but within the past ten years some are now using steel-wheeled tractors for farm work.

Conservative Mennonites maintain conservative dress but accept most other technology. They are not a unified group and are divided into various independent conferences. Moderate Mennonites differ very little from other conservative, evangelical Protestant congregations. There are no special form of dress and no restrictions on use of technology. They emphasize peace, community and service.

Another group of Mennonites have established their own colleges and universities and have taken a step away from strict Bible teaching. They ordain women pastors, embrace homosexual unions, and practice a liberal agenda, focusing on peace studies and social justice issues. Very little is mentioned in their church services regarding the fact we are all sinners and in need of a Savior as a sacrifice for our sins, rather focusing on maintaining good works and service to others.

The word "Mennonite" today can mean so many things; there are almost as many varieties of Mennonites as there are fast food chains. Some groups are more evangelical than others; some groups are focused on Bible study and prayer; other groups are carefully maintaining the works-based tradition set out by their ancestors; and, sadly, some groups

have left the faith of their fathers and focus instead on current social issues."

Mennonites are committed to nonviolence, nonresistance, and pacifism. Huh, sounds like some Baptist preachers I know. Not that there is anything wrong with these traits but I believe the time for pacifism is over. Mennonites will not join the military and therefore they, like many other groups, enjoy the freedoms of America at the expense of others who gave and are giving their life to have such freedom.

I am sure, like many other religious groups, there are some that are saved, but basically they are rank Arminians. We could go on but I believe this answers the question at hand sufficiently enough. God Bless!

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My answer to the question is no they are not. Acts 2:47 says, **"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."** You see, the first Church believed in the sovereign grace of God in salvation. **"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call"** (Acts 2:39). I have looked over a few of the articles of faith and have found Mennonites to believe in freewill, or everybody has a choice to be saved or not, this belief is not Bible based.

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A true New Testament church in 2016 can only be found under the Baptist name. No other churches can trace both doctrine and lineage throughout the 2000 years since Jesus Christ started His church that the gates of Hell would not prevail against (Matt. 16:18). The Mennonites are one of the few denominations that may sometimes try to claim that noble lineage of the Anabaptists and Waldenses of early church history, but their doctrine has departed from God's Word many years ago, and the modern denomination cannot be called a true New Testament church as described in the Bible.

The history of the Mennonites begins in Switzerland with the Protestant Reformation, particularly through the teachings of Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531). The triumvirate of Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz and George Blaurock were disciples of the famous Reformer, but due to Zwingli's hesitance to completely renounce Infant Baptism, the three started their own congregation and affiliated themselves with other like-minded Anabaptists and became known as the Swiss Brethren (to distinguish them from Moravian Brethren, and other Brethren factions around Europe). These particular men cannot be called true Baptists, because they never did seek authority for their baptism, but proceeded to produce their own church through "self-

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# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What Scriptures can you give to confirm or deny the practice of people standing before the church and giving a testimony?

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It is quite possible the practice came into use in churches in the form of exhortation. I Timothy 6:12 states: **"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."** This Scripture could also relate to the admonition regarding assembling with the Lord's church in Hebrews 10:23-25: **"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."**

John Gill, the Baptist expositor gave the following comment on I Timothy 6:12:

"...both before the brethren at Lystra, at his baptism and admission into the church, before whom he gave an account of his faith, and made a profession of it; and who, upon this, and his agreeable life and conversation, gave a good report of him to the Apostle Paul, Acts 16:1-2, and before the apostle, and the rest of the elders, when they laid

their hands on him, whereby an extraordinary gift was conveyed unto him, I Timothy 4:14 (Vol. 9, p. 312)."

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There are two Scriptures that deny the practice of people standing before the church and giving a testimony, but I believe Matthew chapter 6 should be read in view of this question also. The two Scriptures that I believe discourage this practice are found in Luke 18:9-14 and I Corinthians chapter 14.

Luke 18 teaches humility before God and I Corinthians 14 tells us that our testimony should be to the lost, not the saved (in this case the church). What little I know of testimonies from people I used to work with is no more than a blubbing display of folks that are not serious about serving God and want attention for their faithlessness and sin.

I do not believe in displaying pictures of crosses, the so-called picture of Jesus, and/or wording on a t-shirt to show that one is a Christian, or so called. We go to church to worship God in spirit and in truth. **"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"** (John 4:24). It is not to work up some display of emotions

by crying and blubbing to get people excited.

Many times it is women (widows who give testimonies). So, what do we do with these two verses of Scripture if this practice is allowed? **"And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church"** (I Cor. 14:35). **"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence"** (I Tim. 2:11-12). This is something that many of our churches today are failing to practice.

As much as I hesitate to say this, I believe most men are afraid of their wives/woman. Seems there is more of a fear in losing church members than in keeping the Word of God. A word to wives/woman, you should be ashamed of yourself if you are one of these women that are doing these things, **"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works"** (I Tim. 2:9-10).

Our testimony should be our speech, actions, and our dress to a lost and dying world. The preacher is there to, **"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine"** (II Tim. 4:2). Your preacher is ordained of God to preach His Word. Let the church hear him. The church service is not for those who want sympathy for their sins. God Bless!

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I can give you a verse, but I can also tell you about John the Baptist who preached repentance before baptism. I ask, how did John the Baptist know they had repented? Answer, they had to give a testimony and show fruits.

**"But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus"** (Acts 9:27). Looks like a Biblical testimony.

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**"And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men"**

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# Forum #1

(Continued from page 12) ♦

rebaptism." On January 21, 1525, Grebel baptized Blaurock and Blaurock then baptized the entire congregation. Whether any of this group ever sought out a true New Testament church for scriptural baptism cannot be determined by this researcher. The authority to baptize lies in no mere man, such as Conrad Grebel, but must be obtained by the authority of an existing church.

The Swiss Brethren were indeed Anabaptists, and among them, there likely existed many true New Testament churches that would have had their roots and authority from the ancient Waldensians, Petrobrusians, Cathari, Paulicians and other Anabaptist forefathers that still held true to the Bible doctrines of church authority and church discipline. These teachings infiltrated and substantiated many congregations and the consequential founding of the Mennonite denomination reveals much doctrinal truth.

In January of 1536, a young Frieslander (now Holland or Netherlands) named Menno Simons rejected the Roman Catholic priesthood and joined the Anabaptists. Obbe Philips and his brother Dirk were instrumental in Menno Simons coming to recognize the need to leave the Catholic heresy and find the Lord's true church, through the clear teachings of His Holy Bible. Baptized and ordained by Anabaptist authority, I have no personal doubts that Menno Simons was a true Baptist (by today's standards) and his personal doctrine is seen vividly in his writings. Within months of his defection, a gaudy price was put upon his head and he spent the rest of his life hounded,

persecuted, and on the run from the state churches.

The importance of Menno Simons to Baptists and Mennonites is mostly through his prolific and effective writings. He did not "found" any churches or movements, but God brought him along at a crucial time, when many Anabaptists were being 1) deceived into violent demonstrations and 2) going along with the loose morals of the conventional religious times. He wrote extensively, exhorting holy living and peaceful remonstrations. The common links between the Dutch Anabaptists and the Swiss Brethren were because of his influence in clarifying the Scriptures to his generation.

The naming of the Mennonites, like so many other groups in history, was given to them by others, well after the fact of their organization and Menno Simons' death. With the similarity in doctrine with the Dutch Anabaptists that had become known by the name of their most visible leader, particular branches of the Swiss Brethren also became known as Menists, or Mennonites. Primarily because they took earnestly to Menno Simons' teachings on pacifism and church discipline for purity.

As to the modern Mennonites scattered through the four corners of the Earth, there are at least five modern branches that vary from conservative, Amish-like congregations to liberal, homosexual-embracing groups. All branches that this author knows of have long since departed from teaching the doctrines of grace or landmark church truth, so that none today would qualify as one of the Lord's New Testament churches. Selah! Think about it!

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The original Mennonites named after one of their most famous leaders, Menno Simons, were in all probability what we would today identify as Baptists in faith and practice. G. H. Orchard, a Baptist historian in the 1800's wrote *A Concise History of the Baptists*. Orchard came to the conclusion that the original Mennonites were of the Baptist lineage but later departed from the faith once delivered (pp. 365-376). J. R. Graves wrote an introductory essay for the book in 1855 where he quotes from Mosheim, the Lutheran historian and from *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* to support the idea that the original Mennonites were Baptist in faith and practice.

Graves quoting Mosheim:

"The true origin of that sect which acquired the name Anabaptists, by their administering anew the right of baptism to those who came over to their communion, and derived that of Mennotists from that famous man to whom they owe the greatest part of their present felicity, IS HID IN THE REMOTE DEPTHS OF ANTIQUITY, and is consequently extremely difficult to be ascertained (Pp. xvi-xvii)."

Graves quoting *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*:

"The Mennonites are descended from the tolerably pure evangelical Waldenses, who were driven by persecution into various countries; and who during the latter part of

the twelfth century, fled into Flanders and into the provinces of Holland and Zealand, where they lived simple and exemplary lives--in the villages as farmers, in the towns by trades, free from the charge of any gross immoralities, and professing the most pure and simple principles, which they exemplified in a holy conversation. They were, therefore, in existence long before the Reformed Church of the Netherlands...Again, We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times Mennonites, were the original Waldenses; and who have long in the history of the Church, received the honor of that origin. ON THIS ACCOUNT THE BAPTISTS MAY BE CONSIDERED AS THE ONLY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY WHICH HAS STOOD SINCE THE APOSTLES; AND AS A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY WHICH HAS PRESERVED PURE THE DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH ALL AGES."

John T. Christian also affirmed the idea that the original Mennonites were indeed Baptists and he cites the work of Ypeij and Dermount in Volume One p. 138:

"The Waldenses scattered in the Netherlands might be called their salt, so correct were their views and devout their lives. The Mennonites sprang from them. It is indubitable that they rejected infant baptism and used only adult baptism."

However, the Mennonites would later depart from the faith and began to substitute pouring for immersion. J. T. Christian quotes Isaac Backus on pp. 145-146 to support this:

"The historian Backus explains

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## Forum #1

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the change of the Mennonites from immersion to affusion in the following manner: The Mennonites are also from Germany and are of like behavior, but they are not truly Baptists now. Their fathers were so in Luther's time, until confinement in prison brought them to pour water on the head of the subject, instead of immersion; and what was then done out of necessity is now done out of choice, as other corruptions are."

The very first article that I wrote for The Berea Baptist Banner was entitled *Was Menno Simons a Baptist?* I have lost the manuscript. I think it was published in 1981 or 82. I quoted from the Works of Menno Simons extensively and came to the conclusion that he and his followers appeared to be very Baptist. However, I also concluded that the Mennonites would later depart from the faith once delivered.

There is much among the Mennonites that is commendable. Their simplicity of life, separation from the world, emphasis on family, and practice of church discipline are all worthy of emulation. However modern day Mennonites believe in the universal invisible church myth. They are Arminian in doctrine, even believing you can lose your salvation. Some baptize by immersion, yet many in various places adopted sprinkling and pouring as a substitute for immersion. For these reasons alone I would not regard them as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ in their present faith and practice.

TOM ROSS

## Forum #2

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**and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; ... So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. ... And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law. ... Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God" (Neh. 8:1-4, 8, 13, 18).**

I give this passage as a text, that conclusively proves that the purpose of a "person" standing before the congregation of God's people is to INSTRUCT, TEACH and GIVE the "law of God distinctly." Selah! Think about it!

In the New Testament, we see the same purpose that God meant for His churches. **"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: ... 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; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:11-15).** The pastors and teachers are to stand before the congregation for the purpose of: 1) perfecting of the saints; 2) the

work of the ministry; 3) to edify the body of Christ. Selah! Think about it! Nothing else allowed that might bring in "sleight of men" or "cunning craftiness" to deceive. It is to all be controlled by those appointed to positions of authority by God the Holy Spirit, through the vote of the church.

**"How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying" (I Cor. 14:26).** The modern practice of having various members stand up before their assemblies and to "testify" of what God has done in their lives, has no precedent in Scripture. The Apostle Paul was not loathe to give his "testimony," but it was done in personal evangelism and in the manner of preaching the Word. Personal testimonies occur during preaching, and that is Biblical, but to devote a service, or portion thereof to non-authorized speaking and happenstance emotions is counterproductive to having a worship service that is letting **"...all things be done decently and in order" (I Cor. 14:40).** "Decently" in this verse means "elegantly" in the Greek and **"in order"** means a "fixed succession." No haphazard collection of testimonies would ever be described as elegant and to "not know what will happen next" defies a "fixed succession," such as a line-up of invited preachers at a Bible Conference.

**"For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (I Cor. 14:31-33).**

Again this passage continues to teach that **"prophesy"** is for instruction and assurance, not "shock and awe" testimonies. God condemns confusion, disorder and chaotic proceedings. The next verse continues to limit the designs of open speaking in the church, **"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (I Cor. 14:34-35).** Keep the order God has for the church assembly. God receives the glory, not the speaker, when it is done according to His will. Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



## God's Golden

(Continued from page 11) ♦

means the choice and love of God toward those He predestinated to be saved through Christ. This fits well with Ephesians 1:4-5 which says that God **"...in love... predestinated us..."**

### PREDESTINATED

The second link of this chain is predestination: **"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son..."** The word "predestinate" means that God determines one's destiny beforehand ("pre"---before and "destination"---the place someone is going to be). Note here how foreknowledge (*proginosko*) is distinguished from predestination (*proorizo*). Foreknowledge is the choice of persons loved and delighted in by God. Predestination has reference

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# God's Golden

(Continued from page 15) ♦

to the blessings to which the subject of His foreknowledge are designed. Predestination denotes God's determination beforehand of certain persons to conformity to Christ and to eternal glory. It is God's everlasting and unchangeable decree concerning certain persons to be made like Christ in character and destiny (Eph. 1:4; I Cor. 15:49; Phil. 3:21; I John 3:2). What Christ is, the elect are going to be.

Predestination in my text is traced solely to God. In Ephesians 1:5 it is written that God **"...predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ..."** and then Paul adds: **"to himself,"** showing that predestination is owing wholly and solely to God. Then to make his case even stronger, Paul adds: **"...According to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace..."** So predestination is owing to God's good will and pleasure, and its fixed end is the glory of His grace.

## CALLING

This third great link in the golden chain of grace is calling: **"Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called..."** Having already spoken of God's foreknowledge and predestination of a people, Paul now goes on to show how this is accomplished by God. All that God elected in eternity past will in due time be called. Calling is the consequence and effect of election and predestination. God called those He knew beforehand and predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ. These, and these only, are effectually called, justified, and glorified.

Some are troubled because calling is in the past tense here.

This is because we are seeing what God did in eternity past. This is the language of the throne of God, the voice of the Eternal One. In God's eternal purpose calling is as good as done. This is not true in our experience, but it is so in the mind of God to which all things are one eternal now. He **"...calleth those things which be not as though they were"** (Rom. 4:17).

Calling is election and predestination in action. In Romans 8:30 the word **"call"** signifies more than the external call of the gospel. It is the external call of the Holy Spirit of God: **"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake"** (I Thess. 1:5). The call is effectual when we come at the call, and we come at the call when the Spirit makes us willing in the day of God's power. We are called to that to which we were chosen. The only way to make our election sure is to make our calling sure (II Pet. 1:10).

This call is from God. **"...Even as many as the Lord our God shall call"** (Acts 2:39). **"Even us, whom he hath called..."** (Rom. 9:24). **"Faithful is he that calleth you..."** (I Thes. 5:24). **"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began"** (II Tim. 1:9). **"...Even as ye are called in one hope of your calling"** (Eph. 4:4).

This call flows from the grace of God: **"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace"** (Gal. 1:15). This call is with reference to God's

purpose: **"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose"** (Rom. 8:28). This effectual call makes the purpose of God according to election stand: **"(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth)"** (Rom. 9:11).

That this call is always effectual can be seen from the fact it always issues in justification and glorification. Other Scriptures make this abundantly clear. It ends in union with Christ: **"Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised"** (I Cor. 7:18). It leads to an everlasting inheritance: **"...They which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance"** (Heb. 9:15). This call actually brings one out of darkness into light: **"...That ye should shew forth the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light"** (I Pet. 2:9). Those who receive it are faithful to Christ: **"...And they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful"** (Rev. 17:14). This call is unchangeable and irreversible: **"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance"** (Rom. 11:29).

Of the elect which are called without the gospel the Bible knows nothing. This effectual call is the call of the gospel made effectual by the Holy Spirit, as I have already stated. **"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were**

**spoken of Paul"** (Acts 16:14). Paul himself makes it plain that the gospel is the means God uses to call His elect: **"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ"** (II Thess. 2:13-14). Mark the words: **"He (God) called you by our gospel."** The sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth is the means of election. All the elect will be brought to belief of the truth and called by the gospel. Faith is peculiar to God's elect, and that is why we read of **"...the faith of God's elect..."** (Tit. 1:1). Faith comes by the Holy Spirit making the gospel effectual (Rom. 10:16-17; John 17:20).

There are some who would like to omit this link in the golden chain of grace. This is unscriptural. This is a vain attempt to break the golden chain of grace and to rob it of one of its links. All the links of this great chain hold together, and what God has joined together let no man put asunder.

## JUSTIFICATION

The fourth link in the chain is justification: **"Whom he called, them he also justified."** Paul is speaking here of God who sees the end from the beginning. At the same time when God foreknew us and predestinated us He also called and justified us. This is not true in our experience, but it is true in the sense of God's eternal purpose. To God, the pilgrim is already in the celestial City. He sees His eternal purpose as an accomplished fact.

Those whom God calls are ungodly before they are called:

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# God's Golden

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**"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly..."** (Rom. 4:5). But from the moment they obey the call they are justified in the court of their own conscience (Rom. 5:1). As being in Christ, they are perfectly righteous before God.

Justification declares one righteous in a legal sense, and puts a person in right relationship with God. It does not deal with character or conduct, but with relationship to God. Justification consists of the forgiveness of sins and the restoration to the Divine favor.

The source of justification is free grace: **"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"** (Rom. 3:24). The ground of it is the suffering and death of Christ. **"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. . . . Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous"** (Rom. 5:9, 18-19). Our knowledge of our justification before God comes at the point of faith in the gospel: **"Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Rom. 5:1; cf. 3:26).

## GLORIFICATION

The fifth and final link is glorification: **"Whom he justified, them he also did glorify."** Like the other four words already discussed, glorification is spoken

of as if it had already taken place, for what God has determined to be done shall surely be done. We see here the certainty of the counsel of God. Glorification is as certain as predestination and calling.

The glorifying of believers awaits the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead saints and the translation of living saints (I Thess. 4:13-18). Then our bodies of humiliation shall be made like unto the glorious body of Christ. Then we shall possess spiritual bodies in incorruption, in glory, and in power. At the coming of Christ all the predestinated shall be completely conformed to the image of Christ. This is the consummation of the great salvation. The spirit in man is at regeneration conformed to the image of Christ (Eph. 4:24). The soul is being conformed progressively by the Spirit and Word (II Cor. 3:18). The body shall be redeemed at the coming of Christ.

## CONCLUSION

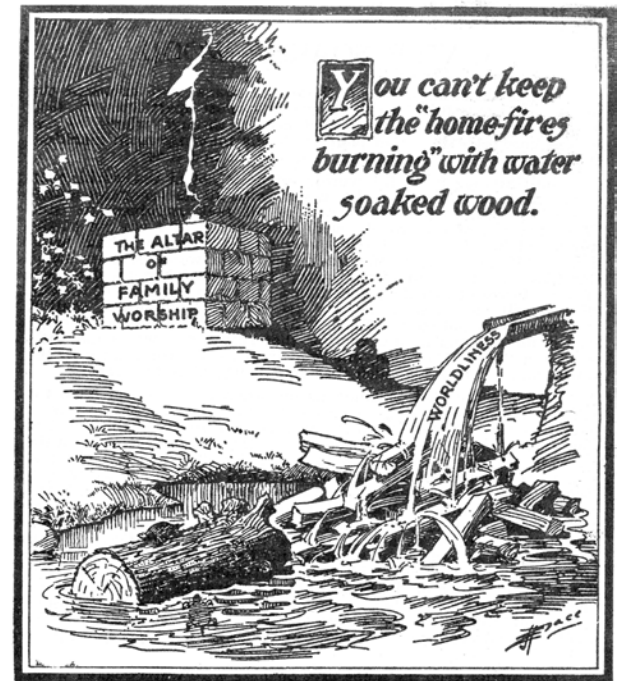
1. The golden chain of grace reaches from eternity past to eternity future, or from everlasting in predestination to everlasting beautification. All the links of the chain are inseparable. In its whole there is nothing but grace from foreknowledge to glorification. All these five things are done by God. In the covenant God took the redemptive process upon Himself. Nothing is left to chance or change.

2. Arminians would attempt to break this golden chain of grace. John Albert Bengel wrongly writes: "Paul does not make the number of those, who are called, justified, glorified, to be absolutely equal; he does not deny that the believer may fail between the special call, and the glorification. . ." (New Testament Word Studies, Vol. II, pp. 98-99).

Bengel could not be more wrong in this statement, for here he denies the indissoluble connection between the successive steps of God's grace in salvation. Nothing is plainer in my text than that these different expressions relate to the same individuals. To

imagine God predestinated some individuals to be conformed to the image of Christ who never experience it, is to make God a failure. To say such contradicts the expressed language of the passage in Romans 8:29-30. All successive steps taken by God in the salvation of the elect are indissolubly connected, and a single link is never wanting. He who ordained the ends has ordained the means to that end. The same number foreknown and predestinated are also called, justified, and glorified. This number is so certain it can neither be increased nor diminished.

Arminian heretics fail to see that it is God that undertook to do all these five things. Had these things been contingent upon man's feeble power and frail will, Christ might have been the firstborn among but very few brethren. Arminians would have Christ bring few sons to glory instead of many as the Bible says (Heb. 2:10). Arminians would have but very few made righteous instead of the many Christ actually made righteous (Rom. 5:19). According to them, Christ would have seen but very few of His seed, for most, if not all, would burn in Hell. But the Bible says that Christ **"...shall see his seed..."** (Isa. 53:10) and that the promise of salvation



is **"...sure to all the seed..."** (Rom. 4:16). Arminian heretics would have God making a covenant in time ordered in a very few things and most uncertain, but the Bible says God made **"...an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure..."** (II Sam. 23:5). If foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification was dependent upon free will, then Christ would be a King without any subjects, and a Captain without any soldiers! The truth is that God set His heart upon a remnant to be conformed to the image of Christ, and His decree is absolutely certain to come to pass. In spite of the opposition of the powers of darkness, Christ will be the firstborn among very many brethren.

3. Do you feel sad that you have offended God by breaking His commandments? Do you struggle against indwelling sin? Do you hunger and thirst for righteousness? If so you may conclude you are called and justified by God and shall one day be glorified.





# 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.

## JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SUES NORTH CAROLINA TO STRIKE DOWN HB2

(WNS)--Attorney General Loretta Lynch announced the Justice Department will file a federal civil rights lawsuit to declare North Carolina's so-called "bathroom bill" discriminatory and bar its implementation. Lynch accused legislators of creating state-sponsored discrimination against transgender individuals. "This law provides no benefit to society, and all it does is harm vulnerable Americans," she said in an afternoon press conference to announce the suit. "This action is about a great deal more than bathrooms. This is about the dignity and the respect that we accord our fellow citizens and the laws that we as a people and as a country enacted to protect them—indeed to protect all of us."

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## FEDS: ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS MUST REDEFINE GENDER

(WNS)--The Obama administration officially took the so-called bathroom debate to the national stage May 13 by issuing a directive requiring all public schools to allow transgender students to use the restroom or locker room facilities of their choice. Schools that refuse, risk losing federal funding. In a joint letter, the U.S. departments of Justice and Education told every school district in the country that sex under Title IX is not defined by a student's birth certificate but rather his or her gender identity. Under new school standards outlined in the letter, as

soon as a parent or legal guardian claims a child's gender identity differs from previous records, the school must treat the student accordingly. That means if a male student claims to be a girl, the school must allow him to use the girl's restroom and locker room facilities without the need to produce a medical diagnosis or birth certificate.

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## SOUTH CAROLINA LEGISLATURE PASSES 20- WEEK ABORTION BAN

(WNS)--South Carolina on May 17 became the 17th state to acknowledge an unborn baby's capacity for pain and pass a bill to ban abortions at 20 weeks of gestation or later. "It is a great day in South Carolina," said Faye Hill, executive director of the Lowcountry Crisis Pregnancy Center. "I believe that more babies will be saved from abortion in our state." After a six-year battle in the state between legislators, the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act passed the state Senate in March. On Tuesday night, South Carolina's General Assembly approved it 79-29. South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, a Republican, said earlier this year she could not see a scenario in which she would not sign the bill into law.

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## SAME-SEX MARRIAGE ADVOCATES WORK TO OUST SMALL-TOWN JUDGE

(WNS)--In what could be the nation's first religious litmus test for holding a judicial post, the Wyoming Supreme Court is being asked to

dismiss a small-town municipal court judge because of her Biblical views about marriage. Attorneys for Judge Ruth Neely, along with a growing list of supporters, argue the efforts of an unelected state commission to remove her from office are rooted in religious bias and misinterpretation of the law. In 2014, a judge overturned Wyoming's marriage statute, allowing same-sex couples to get marriage licenses. A reporter asked Neely, the Pinedale municipal court judge and a part-time circuit court magistrate, if she was excited about performing gay weddings. In the opinion of the Wyoming Commission on Judicial Conduct and Ethics, Neely gave the wrong answer: Her Biblical convictions about marriage precluded her from solemnizing such a union.

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## OKLAHOMA GOVERNOR VETOES BILL MAKING ABORTION A FELONY

(WNS)--Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin on May 20 vetoed a bill that would have criminalized abortion in the state, saying the proposed law was too vague and would not survive an inevitable test in court. The Oklahoma Senate passed the measure to make performing abortion "unprofessional conduct" and a felony. Any physician convicted of assisting in an abortion would face one to three years in prison and the revocation of his or her medical license. The bill included an exception to allow an abortion to save the mother's life. "The bill is so ambiguous and so vague that doctors cannot be certain what medical circumstances would be considered 'necessary to preserve the life of the mother,'" Fallin said. "While I consistently have and continue to support a re-examination of the United States Supreme Court's decision in Roe v. Wade, this legislation cannot accomplish that re-examination."

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## ARTISTS SUE TO PROTECT

## RELIGIOUS, ARTISTIC FREEDOMS FROM PHOENIX ORDINANCE

(WNS)--The owners of a stationery art studio in Phoenix are suing the city over an ordinance they say could force them to create art that violates their religious beliefs. The Christian law firm Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) represents Breanna Koski and Joanna Duka of Brush & Nib in the lawsuit, which they filed May 12 in state court. According to Jonathan Scruggs, one of the ADF attorneys on the case, the artists sought legal advice after seeing lawsuits in other states against Christian bakers and florists whose religious beliefs prevented them from providing services for same-sex weddings. Duka and Koski, who produce hand-painted wedding invitations and other stationery, wanted to know their risks and rights. The Phoenix City Council passed the ordinance in 2013. Though no couple had challenged a business in the city, ADF looked into the ordinance and found Brush & Nib could face fines of up to \$2,500 a day for each day they declined to produce stationery for a same-sex wedding. The women could also face jail time of up to six months.

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## STATES SUE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION OVER RULES REDEFINING GENDER

(WNS)--Eleven states filed suit against the Obama administration May 25 over its demand that public schools allow students to use the restroom and locker room facilities of their choice, rather than their biological gender. Earlier this month, the federal departments of justice and education issued the directive, saying Title IX of the Civil Rights Act applies to gender identity as well as sex. Attorneys general in Oklahoma, Alabama, Wisconsin, West Virginia, Tennessee, Maine, Arizona, Louisiana, Utah, and Georgia disagree. State officials say the Obama

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## Bible & the Newspaper

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administration has "conspired to turn workplace and educational settings across the country into laboratories for a massive social experiment, flouting the democratic process, and running roughshod over commonsense policies protecting children and basic privacy rights," according to the lawsuit.

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### FEW SYRIAN CHRISTIANS GET ASYLUM IN U.S., DESPITE GENOCIDE DECLARATION

(WNS)--Two months after the Obama administration called out militant terror group Islamic State (ISIS) for committing genocide against Christians in Iraq and Syria, refugee data show those finding a safe haven in the United States are not the ones suffering the most persecution. Last year, President Barack Obama set the goal of bringing 10,000 Syrian refugees to the United States in fiscal year 2016. So far, the State Department is on track to fall well short of that number, with only about 2,700 successfully resettled. State Department figures show 499 Syrian refugees have resettled in America this month, but not a single one was a Christian or member of another religious minority group targeted for genocide, according to CNSNews reports. "For me, that has got to change," said Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., at a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee hearing on May 26. "I mean that is unconscionable." Of the 2,705 Syrian refugees who came to the United States this fiscal year, 97 percent are Sunni Muslims. Only 12 identified with a form of Christianity, either Catholic, Greek Orthodox, or Protestant, along with 10 Yazidi refugees.

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### TEXAS SAYS, 'COME AND TAKE IT,' TO FEDS OVER TRANSGENDER DIRECTIVE

(WNS)--The federal government and Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick are locked in a game of chicken. On Friday, May 13, President Barack Obama sent a letter ordering public schools to allow transgender students to use the restrooms and changing facilities of their choice or else schools will lose federal education funding. The same day, Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick suggested Texas would be willing to forfeit its federal education funding rather than follow the president's directive. The federal directive came amid dueling lawsuits between North Carolina and the Justice Department over a state law that protects businesses that base access to restrooms and locker rooms on biology, rather than gender identity. Texas currently receives \$10 billion in federal education funding. Millions of students and programs would be affected by this potential loss of funding, but Patrick said Obama "can keep his 30 pieces of silver. We will not yield to blackmail."

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### OKLAHOMA ADOPTS LAW DESIGNED TO CREATE 'AN ABORTION-FREE SOCIETY'

(WNS)--This November, Oklahoma residents will start seeing state-sponsored, pro-life messages. Gov. Mary Fallin signed The Humanity of the Unborn Child Act on June 6, with the goal of moving the state toward "an abortion-free society," according to the bill. The new law requires the State Department of Health to develop and distribute educational material about babies developing in the womb and maintain on its website "a comprehensive list" of agencies and services that help women through pregnancy and childbirth. The material must be geared toward helping women through pregnancy and promoting adoption instead of abortion.



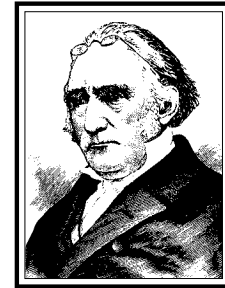
## Prevalent Prayer

By Francis Wayland  
(1796 - 1865)

**"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).**

You must all have observed, my brethren, the importance which the Scriptures attach to the subject of prayer. We are exhorted to pray always, lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting. We are encouraged in all things, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, to make our wants known unto God. It is the intention of our Father in Heaven that our lives should be a continual prayer, that in all our concerns, whether great or small, we should ask His direction, expecting His blessing, and return to Him without ceasing our tribute of grateful adoration. It is our privilege to live ever in intimate communion with God; so that the spiritual intercourse between us and the Creator should be as unlimited and as incessant as our dependence upon Him.

In the New Testament this subject assumes a new and even more interesting aspect. Sinners might well shrink back from approaching a God of infinite holiness. From the abyss of our moral degradation, it might seem presumptuous to lift up our eyes to the place where His honor dwelleth. But the gospel reveals to us an atoning sacrifice, an all-prevailing intercessor, who has purchased our pardon, through whose merits we are invited to draw near unto God. Approaching the mercy-seat in His name, we may cast behind us our own unworthiness; and pleading the atoning sacrifice of God manifest in the flesh, ask for all that we need, in the full



assurance that God will hear us for the sake of the Beloved. We thus have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us. Such is the new relation in which we stand to God, the Judge of all, in consequence of the death and sacrifice of His well-beloved Son.

But more than this: God has, in the most explicit manner, assured us that He will answer our prayers. It is not needful for me here to pause and inquire about the manner in which the fulfillment of this promise may be reconciled with the doctrine of the divine decrees; or with the truth that God governs the universe by general laws. God has declared that He never disregards the feeblest supplication of the least of His children. Faith asks for no firmer reliance than the Word of the unchanging God. Our Lord has said to us, **"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father..."** (Luke 11:9,13) in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him? **"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you..."** (John 16:23). The Scriptures clearly teach, that whatsoever we ask for, under the conditions which God has revealed, will be granted to us, not indeed according to the measure of our unwise desires, but the

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# Prevalent Prayer

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measure dictated by omniscient knowledge and infinite love.

I need not remind you, that the Word of God is filled with examples of answers to prayer, for every conceivable blessing. Our great High Priest Himself offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears. The prayers of nations have often prevailed to avert a national calamity. The prayers of individuals, such as Moses and Samuel and David, have been answered in the salvation of a whole people from pestilence and utter destruction. The prayers of saints for temporal as well as spiritual mercies, for themselves, for each other, and for the people of God, have been abundantly answered in time past, and they will be answered in time to come, unless the Spirit of inspiration has taught us to believe a lie. Our Lord places this subject in the strongest light when He says, **"..If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you"** (Matt. 17:20). It may be said, and said truly, that this language is figurative. But though it be figurative, it must mean something; and it can mean nothing, if it does not teach, that things utterly beyond the power of natural causes, are possible to the prayer of humble, earnest, confiding faith.

Such is the teaching of the Word of God, and we believe it all to be true; but how does it correspond with the facts which are everywhere transpiring around us. We believe it to be true, but we most commonly act as if it were false. We generally pray with but little expectation that our prayers will really be answered, and too

frequently justify our unbelief by the supposition that some change must have occurred in the manner of the divine dispensations. We take it for granted that we can not expect God to do at this time as He did on the day of Pentecost, and in the time of the apostles. We have been praying for centuries for the conversion of the world, yet the world is not converted. We pray for a revival in our churches, but our churches are not revived. We pray for an increase of piety in our own souls, but we continue immersed and steeped in worldliness. We pray for the conversion of our children, but they grow up without God in the world. How shall we account for all this? Has God ceased to be the unchangeable God? Is not Christ Jesus the same yesterday, today, and forever? Are not His promises, as of old, yea and amen? Hath He said and will He not do it, hath He spoken and will He not make it good?

Such questions as these may perhaps find the elements of a solution in the words of the text. We here find an explicit and universal assurance, that the prayers of the people of God will be answered. With this is connected the condition by which this assurance is limited. The promise is, **"..ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done...."** The condition is, **"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you...."**

Let us consider first the promise, and secondly, the condition.

I. The promise is, **"Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."**

The first thing which strikes us in reading these words is their universality. The grant which they contain is as absolute as language can make. **"Ask what ye will...."** there is no limit as to the objects of prayer. It is like the saying of Christ to the Syrophenician woman, **"..**

**Be it unto thee even as thou wilt"** (Matt. 15:28). **"..It shall be done...."** The promise is without a peradventure. It is fixed as the ordinances of God. It is as definite as the promise to Noah, **"While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease"** (Gen. 8:22). I do not see how we can escape from the plain and literal meaning of the words even if we desired it.

But if this be the case, we naturally ask, is there no restriction in the application of this promise. It was addressed originally to the apostles. Were not they the only persons to whom this assurance was given? This is evidently an important inquiry, for on the answer to it depends our personal interest in the whole matter. We must seek for the truth here, not by attempting to harmonize the words with any theory of our own, but simply by examining the context for ourselves.

We ask then, was our Lord addressing His hearers as apostles, or merely as disciples who stood in the same relation to Him as we do at this moment? Observe the preceding verses. **"I am the vine, ye are the branches..."** (John 15:5). Were the apostles the only branches of the vine? Were they the only members of the body of which Christ is the head? **"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing"** (John 15:5). Is this true of the apostles alone, or of every believer? In the verse immediately preceding the text, it is said, **"If a man, (not an apostle) abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, ...and men gather them and cast them into the fire"** (John 15:6). This is certainly a general sentiment. It is as true of you and

me, as it was of the eleven apostles. Then follow the words of the text. **"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you"** (John 15:7). Our Lord proceeds, in the next verse, to say, **"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples,"** not, my apostles. We can not therefore give to these words a restricted meaning, without doing violence to the whole spirit of the passage, and setting at defiance the plainest principles of interpretation. We must admit that they announce, not a special but a general law of the divine dispensation. But in the laws of God's moral government, we and the apostles, and all other men stand precisely on a level. We are authorized therefore in taking this promise just as it stands, and receiving it as our own, just as much as the apostles to whom it was originally given.

II. Let us now, in the second place, examine the conditions of this wonderful promise. **"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you...."**

What is meant by abiding in Christ? I think it has precisely the force of the phrase abide in my love, used in the tenth verse of this chapter. It is to have the love of Christ within us, as an all controlling motive. It is analogous to the words of the apostle, **"For the love of Christ constraineth us..."** (II Cor. 5:14). It is that holy, tender, grateful affection to Jesus, which is ever moving us to do whatsoever will please Him, and which renders His approval the highest object of our existence. This is what is meant by being in Christ, or being in His love. But our Lord goes further, He says **"..abide in me...."** abide in My love. He speaks not of a temporary emotion, present

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# Prevalent Prayer

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today and forgotten tomorrow. If we abide in Christ, He will take up His abode with us. Love to Him will be the atmosphere which we breathe, which sustains us in life and from which we derive all our spiritual health and vigor. It is the permanent and steadfast condition of the soul. Thus saith the Apostle Paul, **"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"** (Gal. 2:20). Such is it to abide in Christ.

The immediate result of such a life is, that His words abide in us. His precepts will be written on our hearts, and will control all our affections. We shall not only do His will, but we shall do it from love. It will be the spontaneous acting of the soul renewed and transformed into the image of Christ. These two ideas, love and obedience, are so intimately connected that our Lord in this chapter frequently uses them interchangeably. **"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love..."** (John 15:10); he that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me. And then again, if a man love Me he will keep My words and the Father will love him. This is the law of God, that we keep His commandments. To abide in Christ then, is to have our affections supremely fixed on Him as the unchanging condition of the soul; and to have His words abiding in us, is to carry out this affection in universal obedience to His commandments. If this be the meaning of the words, the promise of the Saviour is briefly this, if we, with the whole heart, perfectly love and perfectly obey Christ, we

may ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us.

Here again you will ask, does Christ intend to declare that every child of God receives all that he asks for? If this be the promise, it certainly is not fulfilled. No, my brethren, this is not quite the promise. Many of those who are, as we hope, His children, pray much and receive but little answer. The Apostle James declares, **"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss..."** (James 4:3). The question then returns, what is the limitation with which this passage is to be understood?

We said, in the beginning, that the promise in the text is to be taken absolutely, and without restriction. The words will bear no other signification. **"Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."** In like manner is the condition annexed to it to be taken. If the promise speaks of perfect prevalence in prayer, the condition in like manner speaks of perfect love and perfect obedience. That is to say, if a man love and serve God perfectly, his prayers will infallibly prevail. And this, you see at once, is a general principle in the government of God. We believe that in Heaven, every desire being holy, every desire will be fully gratified. Then **"...I shall be satisfied,"** saith the Psalmist, **"when I awake, with thy likeness"** (Ps. 17:15). Thus saith the Revelator, **"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb...shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters..."** (Rev. 7:16). The meaning of these two passages, though they differ in form, is precisely the same. They teach us that the desires of a holy soul, being perfectly in harmony with the will of a holy God, must be fully gratified.

But you will say, these illustrations are taken from the condition of saints and angels in Heaven. What has this to do with us who are encompassed with infirmity, who bear about with us this body of sin, and who are daily bemoaning its power over us? The words were spoken not to angels and glorified spirits, but to men like ourselves, who can plead no perfect righteousness, and can boast no sinless obedience.

We answer, they are intended to express a general law of the divine dispensation. They announce the general rule by which prevalence of prayer is graduated, the condition under which God pledges His veracity to grant our petitions. That is to say, if the prayer of the perfectly loving and obedient will infallibly prevail, so, in any inferior degree will prayer prevail, in proportion to the perfection of our love and obedience. The words are intended to unfold the relation which exists between the moral temper of our hearts and the prevalence of our prayers. It is as though He had said, your love and obedience is the measure of the guaranty that your prayer shall be answered. I do not say, by any means, that our Father in Heaven does not, in compassion to our infirmity, frequently do much more than He has here promised. This is all of His superabundant love to us in Christ Jesus. It is, however, only as we obey and love Him, that we can plead His promise; and, looking up to Him with confidence, in lowly humility, urge Him to do even as He has said.

The reason of this rule is obvious. Just in proportion as we abide in the love of Christ, and His Words abide in us, His Spirit dwells within us, teaching us how to pray, and what to pray for. The desires which the Spirit of God kindles

in the soul, must be according to the will of God. **"The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us..."** (8:26). The desires of a soul pervaded by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit must be holy, and they can not but be gratified by a holy God. Our prayers are then nothing else than the perfections of God reflected from the soul of the believer, and He must act in harmony with them, unless He deny Himself. The desires of a holy soul in Heaven must be gratified, for they are emanations of the divine will. The desires of a soul in Hell must be ever unsatisfied, for they are, of necessity, perfectly at enmity with God. And so, between these two statements, wherever prayer proceeds from a loving and obedient spirit it will be answered; and the abundance of the answer, will, according to the condition in the text, be measured by our attainments in holiness. It is **"...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"** (James 5:16).

But we need hardly appeal to the Scriptures to confirm a truth which is, in fact, legibly written on the conscience of man. Wicked men on their deathbeds, or in any imminent peril, feel the need of help from on high, but have no confidence whatever in the prevalence of their own prayers; they therefore call upon the most pious man they know of to pray for them. No matter though he be a man whom they have injured and scoffed at, and scorned, they come to him in lowly humiliation, and beseech him to intercede for them before the mercy-seat. What is this but a practical version of the text, **"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what**

♦ (Continued on page 22)



# Prevalent Prayer

(Continued from page 21) ♦

**ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7)?**

While, however, we thus speak, it is to be remembered that God does not pledge Himself to answer our prayers literally in the manner, and at the time we may desire. He answers according to infinite love, guided by omniscient wisdom, and not according to our finite knowledge. He may not give us precisely what we ask for, because He desires to give us something incomparably better. He may not answer us at the instant, but He reserves for us something in the future, tenfold more valuable. He thus, in fulfilling His promises, gives us all the advantage of His omniscient wisdom and infinite love.

If we expect an answer to our prayers for any particular blessing, the Word of Christ that has respect to that particular thing, must specially abide in us. If we pray that the kingdom of Christ may come, we must obey those Words of Christ which concern the coming of His kingdom. We must seek first the kingdom of God. We must make the progress of the religion of Christ the real object for which we live. We must labor and suffer reproach, and endure cheerfully the scorn of men, and hold our property and all that we call our own, subject every moment to the will of the Master, that so we may glorify His name in the conversion of souls. This was the type of primitive piety, and hence it was that the prayers of the saints then prevailed mightily to the pulling down of strongholds. Our prayers will never in like manner prevail until we follow their example. The Lord's arm is not shortened that He can not save, nor His ear heavy that He can not hear. Our God is

a living God, as truly as He was in the days of the apostles. The Holy Spirit is as powerful to bow the heart of man in penitence as it was ever of old.

This subject may also teach us why so many of our prayers on our own behalf remain unanswered. You have been a professor of religion for many years, and looking back upon your Christian life, perceive that you have made but small progress in holiness. It may be that your evidences of piety grow dimmer as you grow older. Religion has become with you a matter of form, rather than an earnest and ever present reality. You are dissatisfied with yourself. At times you are alarmed at your condition. You tell us that you pray daily for deliverance and for the light of God's countenance, but your prayers are not answered. You sink deeper and deeper in despondency, and you can find no access to the throne of the heavenly grace.

My brother, is there not a cause? You pray, but does the Word of Christ abide in you? Are you honestly and earnestly laboring to keep all of Christ's commandments? Have you broken off from everything in word, and thought, and action, that you know is displeasing to Him; and are you doing His will at all hazards and at all sacrifices? When you think of submitting your actual, practical, every day life to Christ, do you not know that before you can do this, a great change must pass over you. The world, its wealth, its pleasures, its ambitions, and its society are engrossing those affections that belong only to God, and encroaching sadly upon those hours which should be given to prayer, meditation, doing good, and the social worship of the saints. What self-denials are you enduring for Christ, what

crosses are you taking up and bearing after Jesus? So long as you live thus, it is all in vain to talk about praying for holiness and communion with God. The Words of Christ must abide in you if you would have prevalence in prayer. If you love Christ you must keep His commandments, though in so doing you break loose from every other association, and stand perfectly alone. You never will have the witness in yourself until you make sacrifices for Christ. Until you do your first works, and strengthen the things that are ready to die, your prayers for the indwelling of the Spirit will be as the idle wind. Yea, though you cry aloud and shout, God will not hear your prayer. Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

These same remarks apply emphatically to our prayers for our relatives and friends.

You are a parent. You are anxious, and justly so, about the eternal welfare of your children. You tell us you pray for them daily, and you ask your friends to pray for them. They are nevertheless growing up to be worldly and thoughtless, and are evidently wandering farther and farther from God. Your prayers are unanswered, and it seems as if the promises of God, in your case had utterly failed.

It may be, Christian parent, that God is making trial of your faith. But before you accuse God of unfaithfulness, it may be well to ask, have the Words of Christ respecting this particular thing abode in me. Have you brought these children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Have you on every suitable occasion, set before them their danger, and pointed them to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world? Have you never, for the sake of worldly advantage, placed

them in circumstances under which every serious reflection would naturally be dissipated? When ambition for social position leads in one direction, and the will of God in another, which do you really desire your children to follow? Parents have sometimes desired me to converse with their children on the subject of personal religion, while I knew that they were exposing them to all those influences which must render every effort for their salvation utterly hopeless. Brethren, if we desire that our prayers should be answered, our lives and our prayers must be in harmony. It is mocking God to ask Him to do something for us, and then place every obstacle in our power in the way of His doing it. Unless the Word of Christ abide in us, we can never ask in faith that God will hear us.

And lastly, we may learn from this subject that answers to prayer for the conversion of souls is the sure test of the piety of a saint. In all our churches, prayer is made without ceasing for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. If our prayers are not answered, it must be because we do not abide in Christ, and His Words do not abide in us. When, therefore, additions are not continually made to a church, it is a cause for alarm and self-examination. There must be wrong somewhere, and that wrong must be repented of before a blessing can be expected. We should search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. We must abide in Christ, and His Words must abide in us, and then we may ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us. The mountain of the Lord's house must be established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, before all nations shall flow unto it.



END

## The Short Pews



Brief  
Articles  
by Curtis  
Pugh

### THE LAW AND CHRIST

Signs and stickers proclaim "God's Ten Commandments." Probably everyone knows that the ten commandments are a part of the Old Testament law of God. Paul wrote, **"But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully"** (I Tim. 1:8). There is a right use of the Old Testament law and there is a wrong use of it. One is "lawful" while the other is not.

Paul explains the law's purpose, saying: **"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight"** (Rom. 3:19-20). The purpose of the law is not to enable men to be righteous in God's eyes by their good works. Just the opposite is true. The law was given to shut men's mouths and stop them from boasting in their own good works. That is, to prove to individuals that they are **"...guilty before God."** The law does this since no person has ever nor can ever keep the law of God.

The Lord's brother, James, wrote: **"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all"** (James 2:10). Peter called the law a "yoke" saying, **"Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our**

**fathers nor we were able to bear"** (Acts 15:10)? Saved or lost, no man can keep the law!

Farther along in Romans 3 (quoted above) we read these words: **"To declare, I say, at this time his [God's] righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith"** (Rom. 3:26-27). Because of the sacrifice of Christ in the place of His sheep, God can now be just (fair) and at the same time **"the justifier"** of those who believe in Jesus. This is **"the law of faith."**

This method of justification (God's declaring men righteous) does away with bragging! If God declared men righteous based upon their good works (law-keeping) they would have a right to boast. But **"the law of faith"** is this: God declares sinners righteous at the point of faith in Christ and so excludes boasting! Sinners saved by Christ have nothing in which they can boast! Even their faith **"...is the gift of God"** (Eph. 2:8). They can only glorify Christ for their salvation. After all, it is God's purpose, **"That no flesh should glory in his presence"** (I Cor. 1:29). And so God's preachers proclaim this great truth: **"And by him [Christ] all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses"** (Acts 13:39).

### SMELLING A FRAGRANT BRANCH AND KISSING YOUR HAND

Ezekiel spoke against the idol worshiping Jews of his day saying, **"Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit**

**the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them"** (Ezek. 8:17-18). Job declared himself free from idolatry by saying, **"If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above"** (Job 31:26-28). Somebody objects to these texts saying that we do not know the precise meaning of them. What does it mean to **"put the branch to their nose"**? And what does it mean when Job mentions the kissing of his hand by his mouth? Our answer is that while we do not know all the details of these matters, we can discern from the context as well as the statements that Ezekiel and Job were both speaking of idolatrous practices. Seemingly little things, to be sure, but serious things as seen by the judgment of which Ezekiel speaks. Ezekiel was condemning idolatrous sin. Job, on the other hand, was testifying to his cleanness from idolatry. The thing that ties these two passages together is that they both have to do with idolatry among the ancients.

Through Jeremiah, God instructed His people Israel, saying, **"...Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them"** (Jer. 10:2). Whether then or now, the child of God does not need to

◊ (Continued on page 24)

### BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

#### Financial Report

5-1-2016 to 5-31-2016

Beginning Balance .....	\$1,506.70
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
(In memory of Deana Smith) .....	100.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL .....	25.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL .....	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX .....	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV .....	313.45
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	300.00
Carol Willett, Edgewater, FL .....	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL .....	25.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY .....	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR .....	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	200.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL .....	50.00
Grace M B. C., Tulsa, OK .....	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV .....	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC .....	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY .....	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH .....	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN .....	50.00
Parkway L. B. C., Springfield, OR .....	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR .....	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS .....	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Galena, OH .....	2,000.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL .....	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX .....	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....	25.00
Subscriptions .....	49.00
Anonymous .....	210.00
Dividing checks .....	300.00
Sub Total .....	\$5,027.45
TOTAL .....	\$6,534.15
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Printing .....	490.00
Postage .....	711.20
Wages .....	2,300.00
FICA .....	175.96
Dividing checks .....	300.00
Total Expenditures .....	\$3,977.16
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$2,556.99
<b>BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST</b>	
<b>Financial Report</b>	
<b>5-1-2016 to 5-31-2016</b>	
Beginning Balance .....	\$6,769.27
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	100.00
Calvary I. B. C., Sumas, WA .....	200.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	200.00
.....	825.00
TOTAL .....	7,594.27
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Radio Time .....	603.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....	603.98
.....	6,990.29
Interest .....	+ .06
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$6,990.35



#### Postage & Shipping Chart

<b>Order Value .....</b>	<b>Add</b>
Minimum .....	\$5.00
\$25.00-49.99 .....	\$6.00
\$50.00-74.99 .....	\$7.00
\$75.00-99.99 .....	\$8.00
\$100.00 and Up .....	FREE

# The Short Pews

(Continued from page 23) ♦

understand all the meaning behind pagan practices. Rather he needs to eschew them – to stay away from anything related to the worship of idols. The pagan worship involved in their custom of putting an aromatic branch to their mouth or nose as part of idolatrous worship may be unknown to us, but the custom of bringing aromatic (evergreen) branches into homes and businesses is no doubt connected with this same ancient idolatry. And the honoring of the sun by bringing one's right hand to the mouth as if kissing it when viewing the sun's brightness is of similar pagan origin. All paganism is tied to the sun and is ultimately worship of the fertility gods. Father sun, mother earth, observations of solstices, sunrise worship services, Christmas observance, Easter celebrations – all these things and others are connected to and originated from pure paganism.

But some professing Christians

object: these are nice and lovely things to do; our family and our church has always done these things; what will our Christian friends think about us if we stop observing these holidays; we do not mean to worship idols; will God not excuse us; can we not Christianize pagan customs so that they are acceptable to God? Space and time forbids dealing with all the different objections. They all fall into the same category: they are objections to just simply being pure from idolatry. For that is what folk are objecting to. They are objecting to purity. They are objecting to carefulness. They are, in effect, saying, is it not OK for me to go to the roof of a tall building and walk as close to the edge of that roof as possible? The question is not how close to sin can I get without sinning, but rather, how far away can I stay from sin.

The ancient people of our two texts quoted in the first paragraph above knew these things for what they are. The Jews involved in committing the abominations mentioned by Ezekiel had not given up the worship of Jehovah – in their own minds, that is. They had merely added to His worship some of the ways of the Gentiles. So it is with many professing Christians today. (We cannot say whether or not they are true sons). But we can say with Bible authority that such worship is a

mixture of truth and lies. And the Lord Jesus said, **“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth”** (John 4:23-24).

The Samaritan religion in Jesus' day was a mixture of truth and lies. The Samaritans had a temple and a service like that in Jerusalem. They had a priesthood. They had the Old Testament Scriptures. Their worship had existed for generations when Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well in John chapter four. Because of the mixture of lies and truth in this man-made religion of theirs, the Lord Jesus told the Samaritan woman, **“Ye worship ye know not what...”** (John 4:22). So it is whenever people innovate in the worship of God: whenever they bring in customs and practices of the pagan people round about, they do not know what they are worshipping. We must be careful to worship the Father **“in spirit and in truth”** (Job 4:23).

Job mentioned being **“secretly enticed”** (Job 31:27) when seeing the glory of the sun. There is a constant danger of falling into paganism which is defined for us by Paul. He said **“Professing themselves to be wise, they**

**became fools”** (Rom. 1:22). Rather than worshiping God they worshiped creation. Paganism is popular. It is accepted by those in the “camp” of religion. Most professing Christians are pagans. To those whose religious experience is only an imagination of their hearts, paganism is as acceptable as Bible truth. But let those who have been born from above by the Spirit of God mind the Bible: **“Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp [of popular religion], bearing his reproach”** (Heb. 13:13).



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church of Chesapeake, OH, and Pastor Tom Ross would like to announce they will be hosting their annual Fellowship Missions Conference on Saturday morning August 6th.

Services start at 9:30 am.

Preachers who will be preaching are Elders Jeff Short, Justin Meier, and Brent Spears.

Services will include God honoring preaching, earnest prayer, worship, and godly singing! Afterwards a mouth watering Baptist feast fit for kings and priests will be served (Rev. 5:9-10). Y'all Come!

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The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Northport, AL and Pastor Todd Bryant would like to announce their Annual Summer Bible Meeting for July 29th - 31st.

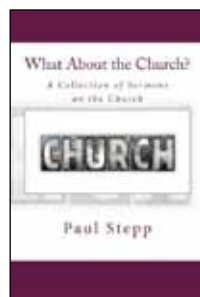
Service times are Friday night at 7:00, Saturday morning at 10:00 followed by lunch, and Sunday at 10:00 followed by lunch.

Scheduled speakers are Elders Chad Beck and John Fry.



## NEW BOOK

What About the Church?  
by Paul Stepp - Retail \$13.00



The Church is important. It has always been important, since the time of Christ. But, as the days grow more evil, and as the wickedness of man grows more rampant, the Church is the last Bastion of the Truth. Sadly, Christianity has largely forsaken a proper worship of God in the Church of Jesus Christ. In this book are compiled (17) sermons on the importance of the Church in today's society, and in today's Christianity. (See postage chart on page 23)

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Little Hills by Nathaniel Hille .....	p. 3
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