

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

Don't Just Do Something, Stand There

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

I have two text passages today, and both come from Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. **"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"** (Eph. 4:14). **"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints"** (Eph. 6:13-18).

Christianity is made up of folks who do, and folks that do not. Some are busy doing something, nearly anything at all, it seems in order that they might be considered useful in some fashion in the world of religion; while others appear as lazy or indolent folks, who only make a sham or charade of religion and through their laziness they contribute nothing positive to religion or Christianity. Indeed,



what passes for Christianity today, is full of people who either say too much and end up endorsing a lot of error and heresy; or people who do not have anything to say and are therefore poor witnesses of the Lord and are found wanting when it comes to the proclamation of the Gospel.

Consider the day and time in which we live, and the state of affairs in the religious realm in our country today: I think there are too many religious folks who are unsure of what the truth is, and who have no true Scriptural foundation for their salvation—much less do they have any proper faith or sincerity of purpose, to govern or guide their attempts to live as the servants of God in today's

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Judges 16

By Roy Mason
(1894 - 1978)



I want to go back to the Old Testament book of Judges, the 16th chapter, beginning with verse 18 for our text, Scripture lesson and text continued, and I want to speak on the most famous haircut of all human history. The reading goes like this, **"And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off**

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The Ruin of An Obstinate Sinner

By Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

"He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. 29:1).

The revealed will of God is the law of the universe. God has the right to expect obedience to His laws from His creatures. As the divine Lawgiver, He cannot tolerate disobedience. Though He is long-suffering toward rebellious mankind, He must at some point punish rebels. Those who will not be reformed by God's restorative discipline



must expect to be ruined by it.

THE PERSON DESCRIBED

The text begins: **"He, that being often reprov'd. . ."** According to these words, there is such a thing as an obstinate sinner, a stubborn, self-willed person, an incorrigible rebel against God. By nature man does not love, reverence, honor, or serve God. **"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God"** (Rom. 8:7-8). Although man owes everything to his Maker and generous Benefactor, he refuses to pay his great

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

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

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KARL, Blaine, WA	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m.	550	5,000	AM

Judges 16

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the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And she said, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him. But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven."

You know, a hair dress is quite an important thing in the life of the human race, that is, that was true until recently, till this old hippy generation came along, with their nasty long hair. They do not seem to care anything about hair dressing, and the dirtier it is, the better. I have seen pictures of African natives with their hair greased with mutton tallow until it was stiff, and what strange shapes. Back in early colonial days, men used to grease their hair with bear grease or "baar" grease, as they called it. Chinese used to shave off all their hair except a long pigtail which hung down the back, and a Chinaman would rather have suffered death than to have had that pigtail amputated. And let not those of us who live in America turn up our nose at the strange head dress of those in other parts of the world, for fashion sometimes decrees strange, as well as unbecoming, styles of head dress. If I should give you my own personal opinion, I would say that one of these cheap, cocklebur, so-called permanent waves which women get today puts the hair in as big a mess as

any African ever dared to put her hair, and I often wonder what people want kinks in their hair for anyhow. My hair is curly, almost kinky by nature, and all my life I have been trying to get the kink out, while thousands pay out good money to get a kink in. Oh, well, I guess we are never satisfied.

Now, some of you have surmised from the Scripture I read that I am going to talk about the haircut of a man called Samson. This haircut is told about here in the Bible. If everybody had adopted the hair style of Samson, the barbers would have all starved to death, for up until the time that he received his famous haircut, no scissors had ever come upon his hair. Samson lived back in the days of the Judges, and he was called from birth to be one of the Judges and deliverers of his people. He was to be a Nazarite from birth, and a Nazarite was characterized by several things. In the first place, he was to touch no wine or strong drink, which is designed to show that the greatest physical strength is to be attained without the use of intoxicants of any sort. What in the world a man or woman wants to poison their system with liquor for is a mystery to me! I read some time ago that enough beer is consumed each year to average half a barrel per person in this country. Half a barrel of swill per person! Well, somebody else got my half barrel, I will say that!

In the next place, Samson and all the other Nazarites were to wear their hair unshorn. Hair was just turned loose to go wherever nature might dictate. Long hair was to be the outward sign of consecration to the Lord as a Nazarite, and this man Samson was surely some man. They put him in jail and he walked away

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Light Contemplations

By Luke Austin
of Cadillac, Michigan

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD" (Psalm 107:43).

GOD'S THRONE

"He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it" (Job 26:9)

In the beginning God. The Bible opens with this plain declaration. Genesis 1 wastes no time on the atheist. It does not bandy words with the skeptics. Just the plain and simple truth before creation, before time and space there was God. When God created the heaven and the earth (Genesis 1:1) He did so with an eternal plan already in place. Declaring the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:9-10). If you need further proof that He has declared what has yet to pass, consider the book of Revelation. God has declared through the pen of John the judgments and final blessed state of this creation, free of sin in that wondrous new heaven and new earth. But when did God cook up this plan? Did He "wing it?" No, God from the time He uttered **"Let there be light"** also already had set in motion the final promises of Revelation 22 **"and they shall see His face."** God who is infinite in all His attributes cannot by nature learn, for His knowledge is infinite. God did not scheme or plan or work out by trial and error. The full scope and scale with all the intricacies from Eden to New Jerusalem were already contained within the mind of God.

God's Word plainly tells us that He, that is God does all things after the council of His own will (Ephesians 1:11). So why my dear

reader do you fret? Why do you find yourself so full of worry and fear? Have you lost sight of the High and Exalted One? Have you forgotten the posture of God that the Holy words of that blessed book reveals? Consider now God, not only in His infinite sovereignty, but the posture by which He rules.

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple" (Isa. 6:1).

Look long and look hard. Chew slowly, and properly digest this verse. Where is God while working all things according to the council of His own will? Why, my dear reader, He sits upon the throne. Can you not find comfort in God's exalted seat? Consider these three encouraging observations.

1. He is seated. God is not the eternal clock winder of modern christendom wringing His hands in the throne room of heaven, pacing back and forth, full of anxiety hoping things work out as He wishes. No He is seated. He is doing all according to His will and nothing in His creation can so much as cause Him to stir in His throne.

2. He is seated upon a throne. He rules. He reigns. Where He sits is enough to tell us of His office in relation to the creation. God is King.

3. High and lifted up. Not only does His seat tell us of His rule but it is a lofty position. High and

lifted. A throne above all thrones, A King above all kings. The God and King of the heavens does what He will in His sovereign reign over the kings of the earth. He turns the hearts of kings whither so ever He will (Prov. 21:1).

So God has declared and God is upon the throne. Comfort your hearts, dear Christians, in these troubling times by beholding God, high and lifted up upon His throne. Nothing is out of place. All things are working for the good of the called of God according to His purpose. (Rom. 8:28). God's throne is the steadfast source of comfort to the believer's soul. Behold it in the Scriptures. See His throne endures from Genesis to Revelation. Who shall dethrone our God? There He sits in Revelation ruling from His omnipotent throne.

"And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him" (Rev. 22:3).

(Luke Austin is a member of the Cadillac Baptist Church of Cadillac, Michigan.)



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with the city gates. He whipped a regular army of Philistines and did feats of strength that were simply astounding. But poor old Samson was just as weak morally as he was strong physically, and you know that is often the case. You will often find a man that is very strong physically, who has not enough moral courage for anything. He could fight like a prize fighter, but he can not conquer a bottle of beer and a little cigarette, a thing not three inches long, that has held many a man in abject slavery, as well as women.

Now Samson's weakness was a pretty woman. I say "pretty" --- I guess they were pretty. He fell victim to first one evil woman and then another. And these Philistine enemies who could not conquer Samson any other way, managed to do it through a woman. And I would like to point out that the Devil, like the Philistines, always works on us along the line of our weak point, and the Devil knows exactly what that weak point is, and do not forget it. Now these Philistines could not find out the source of Samson's amazing strength, so they managed to get Delilah, his heathen wife, to worm the secret out of him. He fooled her by telling her falsehoods about it for awhile, but finally she kept nagging at him, nagging at him --- I tell you, when a nagging woman goes forth to get a man to tell her something, he is going to end up by telling it. And finally Samson told her that his strength lay in his hair. That mighty head of hair was the sign of a Nazarite, and the symbol of his consecration to God as one who had been born to perform a special mission in the world. So Delilah petted and patted this big giant until finally the big boob laid his head over on her lap and went to sleep. Delilah had it all arranged, she had it planned that if Samson went to sleep, a barber was to give him a good haircut, so while he snoozed peacefully with his head over on her lap, the barber proceeded to cut his hair, and when Samson awoke, he went out and thought to fight the Philistines as before, but he found himself without his great strength, the locks of his dedication had been shorn. He was no longer the acknowledged servant of the Lord, he was as weak as any other man. And then the Philistines took him and

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gouged out his eyes, bound him to the mill and made him work like a beast of burden. There he is, the man whom God made strong, under the cruel whip of his enemies, animal-like.

I just have to stop and draw a comparison here. Many a man has been made strong, given a magnificent physique, but let the Devil fasten some habit on him that wrecked him. Oh, it is a pitiful sight to see both men and women wrecked by drink until they are shorn of their God-given strength, and pitiable slaves, and we see this thing all around us today---women wrecks of their former selves, men wrecks, nerves shattered, morals shattered, victims of the Devil and their appetites. It is amazing to even think that so-called civilized people would vote stuff back, actually legalize the sale of stuff that is causing such human wreckage as liquor is causing today. And it is claimed that around 50% of the accidents on the highway are caused by drinking drivers.

I think Samson is a good illustration of a Christian backslider. That shaven man made a slave is a picture of many a person who once was an avowed servant of God and standing for the truth and right, but they got to fooling around the Devil's places. They got tangled up with the things of the Devil. Almost before they knew it, they were in bondage. During the time that we had slot machines in Florida, one of the members of my church told me of seeing a man who used to preach the Gospel standing in front of one of those things with a bunch of nickels in his hand, with a breath

that reeked with booze. Samson shorn of his power, chained to the mill of the Philistines was not a more pitiable sight than was that man. What sport, what high glee those Philistines got out of poor Samson as they gathered around and watched him do the work of a slave! Ah, look at him, that is the fellow that used to be the champion of Israel! Look at him now!

Yes, and when a Christian gets into a backslidden state, gets the Devil's chains on him, he is a laughingstock for the Devil's gang. Look at him, he used to lead in prayer down there at that church. Just look at him now. I think of a man who used to belong to my church. He gave up cigarettes before I ever knew him, and he believed that it was wrong to use them, he could hardly bear to see people smoking, and he was strong and vehement against the habit. But, he got back to his cigarette smoking, and anytime you would see him, there was a streak of smoke coming out of his nose. Old Nicotine gave him the haircut and he was walking the treadmill of the Philistines while the Devil's gang made sport of him. You know, that man died with cancer of the throat.

We have great harm done in our churches and the cause of Christ sometimes by people who push the things that people stand for so hard and oppose the things that are wrong, worldly, with such violence, and then suddenly flop. No, if a person really stands against a thing, they ought to keep on standing against a thing that is wrong, and when they flop over on the Devil's side, they just simply betray the Lord, that is all.

But now, there is something else that I want to call attention to. I have said that Samson is a good illustration of the Christian

who becomes a backslider. Why did I not say that he is a good illustration of the Christian who has fallen from grace? Because there is no illustration of such in the case of Samson. The text does not indicate that Samson was made perpetually bald. It says that after a time, his hair began to grow again. Listen, I thank God that while the Devil may give the child of God a haircut sometimes, may destroy the power and influence of his life for a season, he has no power to utterly and completely ruin him forever. If one such is really a child of God, just as Samson's hair grew again, so will he come back to God again. Let me draw you a picture of a saved man who gets one of the Devil's haircuts and who is shorn of his power as a Christian. Here he is, Satan has shaved him off of all that is distinctive and religious. He has slipped back among the Devil's people, and is seen frequently in the Devil's places of amusement. He has been turned out of his church because of his conduct, and let me say right here that a church ought to turn out those who will not live right, who dishonor their church by their living. I know that is a strange thing today, not many churches do that. Turning a fellow out does not send him to Hell. If he is really a sheep, really belongs in the Lord's fold, he will bleat around till he gets back in, but if he is one of the Devil's old goats, he will butt his way off into the woods and it is the last you will see of him. Now this fellow that I am using as an illustration, he is off out there with the world, he has been turned out of his church but he is not happy. He does not have any satisfaction, he is just as miserable as Samson was at the treadmill. That is one of the signs that a person is a child of

God, the inability to really enjoy the things of the Devil like they once did. That is absolutely ruin for a man or woman when the Spirit of God comes into his life. When any man or woman that claims to be a Christian can truly say, "I love the things of the world, I can engage in them without any qualm of conscience, without any disturbance of soul," as surely as you live, right there is a lost man or woman who has never known the saving grace of God, I do not care how many churches they have belonged to.

Well, by and by this fellow of whom I am speaking begins to drop in to hear an occasional sermon. Oh, I know he just had a spell when he found that he was turned out, he vowed that he would never enter the doors of a church any more. He said that church and that preacher is too strict. He said a lot more things a good deal worse than that, but down in his heart he knew that he ought to have been turned out, he knew that he was in the wrong, and all the time, there is way down in his heart a hankering and a longing for the things of God. So one day I see him slip in and take his seat back in the back of the church. How glad I am to see him! Oh, it does not matter what all he has said about me. As a Preacher, I am glad to see the evidence that he has a hankering for the house of the Lord and for the things of God, and I will venture that if we knew the truth, that fellow has been reading his Bible a little bit. It laid there with dust on the covers for a long while, but the Lord does not have anything that gives the comfort, the solace and the help that the blessed old Bible gives, so he has been taking it down and reading it occasionally, and down in his soul the struggle has been

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Narrow Paths

By Doug Newell IV of
Clendenin, West Virginia

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

MARVEL

A marvel is something that stops you and captures your attention, something that astonishes. The interesting thing about being marveled is it says just as much about the person who is astonished as it does the act. There is quite a bit of marveling in the Scripture. John 3:4-10, **"Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? ... Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. ... Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"**

Jesus preached truth about regeneration, the new birth. Nicodemus' jaw dropped and could not believe what he was hearing, you must be **"born again?"** He was astonished. Jesus said, **"marvel not."** Jesus in turn, marvels at Nicodemus. "You are a teacher and you do not know these things?" The dullness of men and their attitudes toward truth marveled the Lord. In Mark 6:1-6, Jesus traveled with His disciples back home to Nazareth and on the Sabbath, taught in the synagogue. When people heard His message and teaching, they were astonished. Not by the truth. Not by God's Word. Not by the doctrine. But by Jesus. That is a good thing, right? Sadly, not in this case. They did not marvel at the glory of Christ, but found

it incredulous that Jesus, of all people, was preaching these truths. Where did He learn this? Where did this wisdom come from? This carpenter's son? Their attitude was the reason why Jesus said, **"A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."** The Lord left Nazareth without doing very many works. Verse six said, **"And he marveled because of their unbelief."** The Jews marveled at Jesus preaching and Jesus marveled at their unbelief.

In Matthew 8, a Centurion came to Jesus to ask if He would heal his servant, who was sick in a bad way. Jesus said He would come to his house and heal him. "No need! I'm a man of authority and if I tell my servant to do something, he does it. I am not worthy to have you enter my home. Speak the Word, Lord, and he will be healed. In verse 10, it says, **"When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."** The Lord marveled at the Centurion's faith, not because He was surprised, but because it was true and Jesus gloried in truth. Grace caught his attention and glorified His Father and rejoiced at the obedience and the worship of this Gentile man. What captures your attention and makes you stand in wonder? Do you marvel at grace or are you suspicious of God's power to save lost sinners? Many marveled or worshiped the Lord

(Matthew 8:27; 9:8; 9:33; John 5:20; 5:28). Some marveled at His doctrine (Mark 12:17; (Luke 20:26). Still others marveled of low expectations (John 7:14-15) or because Jesus did something they did not expect Him to do, because they expected Jesus to act like themselves (Mark 15:5; Luke 11:38). What is it about the Lord that captures your attention?

In John 4:27, **"And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?"**

What the disciples did not say says a lot. They did not ask the woman what she wanted. They did not ask the Lord why He was talking to her, even though they were thinking about it. It arrested their attention and they were astonished. Not by grace but because the Lord's actions were not what they expected, and not in a good way.

When Jesus did not wash His hands before dinner, the Pharisee marveled. Why? Because Jesus did not meet his expectations. The Pharisee had expected the Lord Jesus to act like he acted. The Pharisee thought washing before dinner to be of the utmost importance and Jesus did not do it, so it astonished him. Pilate was used to men groveling and begging and pleading their case not to be executed. But when Jesus, a clearly innocent man did not answer, he was shocked. This kind of wonder is what the disciples had. They were shocked by the Lord Jesus. Shocked that Jesus would talk to this woman. Shocked that He had any dealings with her. Shocked because that is not what they thought the Lord should be doing.

Rather than marveling at the truth we often will be astonished

just when things happen against our expectations. Either someone exceeds our expectations for them or someone does not live up to them. But either way, our expectations are the standard. We should follow the Lord's example and marvel in what is true. That should be the standard and it should arrest us as sad and incomprehensible when someone rejects the truth of Christ. The disciples marveled that the Lord would even talk to the woman, let alone save her soul. What do you think their reaction was to that? Shocked, no doubt. Are you shocked when the Lord works in someone's life? The disciples did not expect the Lord to save that woman, or anyone in that area, otherwise, they would have brought others to Jesus, like the woman, when she marveled at the grace of God.

(Doug Newell IV is pastor of the Buffalo Valley Baptist Church of Clay, West Virginia.)



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going on. There is anguish, there is bitterness, there is an aching and a craving. He tries to pray, but he does not seem to get anywhere, and I can fancy him saying to himself, "I can not go on like this. I have tested the life of sinful flesh, and there is nothing in it. The cups of the world are all froth, the Devil's bread is all bran, it chokes me, it poisons me, I can not stand it any longer. Oh, that I could get back to God!" What does that mean? It means that Samson's hair is growing again, and that he is about ready to break the bonds of the Philistines. You know what a man or woman like that ought to do? They ought to walk down the aisle of the church and humbly

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and penitently they ought to say publicly, "I have sinned, I have backslidden, I have been in the wrong. Oh, God, forgive me, oh, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, forgive me."

Am I speaking to any backslidden Christian today? Are you unhappy in your present state and condition? Have you perhaps lost your church membership through your neglect and your backsliding? Then it was not the church that was in the wrong--it was YOU, and you ought to make the thing right. Listen, any Christian who is not right with his church is backslidden, I do not care who he is. He can not ignore the church, the one and only institution to which the Lord Jesus committed his work in the world, and be right with the Lord. You just can not do it, that is all.

Now those Philistines made a complete job of cutting Samson's hair. I heard once of an old mountaineer in the mountains of Kentucky whose hair and whiskers had grown until he could hardly see out from behind them, and until one could not really tell what he looked like. One day he went to town and got a barber to work on him. He cut all those bushes and briars from off his face, and when the old mountaineer got home, according to the story, his hound dog did not recognize him, and bit him, and he scared a grandbaby out of its wits. Now those Philistines made a complete job of Samson, he was completely shorn of his power, but the Devil does not always work just that way. Sometimes, he does just a little clipping here and there. My dear friend, has the Devil had his razor on you lately? When a fellow who used to spend

half an hour in prayer gets to the place where he only spends five minutes a day praying, the Devil has been using his razor a little bit. When a fellow gets used to attending prayer meeting, and then begins to drop out with no real providential reason, the Devil is using his razor on him. When the fellow who used to tithe very scrupulously begins to withhold his money, as sure as you live, the Devil is using his razor on him. When the razor gets to work and the hair of conscious resolute devotion to God begins to fall on the floor, lock after lock, the strength is departing, and only as that hair begins to grow again, and spiritual consecration returns, can such persons expect to be useful, influential and strong in the Lord. My Brother or Sister, has the Devil been using his scissors and his razor on you? Has your consecration, your faithfulness, your joy in the work of the Lord dwindled until you are not what you once were? If so, you need to get right, you need to return to the Lord.

But now some of you have never backslidden because of the simple fact that you have never had anything to backslide from. In other words, you have never been converted unto God. I want to talk to you folks who are like that for a moment before I close. Oh, how I long to have people saved every time I speak! If I get up before a seeing audience, how I dislike to see people turn and go away without Christ and without hope! I hope you who are unsaved listening in will not do that today. I hope that you who are listening in who have been considering salvation, who have been thinking, "I really ought to be a Christian," I hope you will not put it off further. Out yonder is a time before you that is uncertain.

You do not know how long time will last for you. You do not know when you will terminate your days in this world, you just do not know. Right now, this minute, is the time to trust the Savior, and to confess Him today.

I read the story once of a certain king who had his servants to light a lamp and to hang it in his palace. He then sent forth heralds to proclaim that so long as the lamp burned in the palace, every criminal and every offender that had incurred the displeasure of the king might be pardoned. That is, if he would enter the king's presence and claim the offered mercy. Some paid heed and hastened to the king's palace to see the king while the light burned, and they received the full and free pardon of the king. Some neglected and delayed until the oil was exhausted in the lamp, and the light of mercy went out, and the offer was at an end. Those who did so met with terrible punishment for their crimes. Listen, there is a lesson for you in that story, that illustration. That spark of life that keeps that heart of yours beating is as precarious as was the light of mercy that glowed in that king's palace. There is the certainty, my friends, that that heart of yours will stop, and you do not know when, either. Hear the offer of the great King today, an offer of full and free and complete pardon in Christ Jesus. Wait not, I beg of you, until the light of life has gone out, and all hope of mercy and pardon is gone forever more. Wait not, but right now repent of your sins and receive Him by faith, and then make opportunity to confess Christ and start to live for Him and to follow Him.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee that we have had the privilege of speaking to people today, and some, perhaps, who

have never known the saving grace of God in Christ. We pray that they may see the precariousness of their situation, may realize that they have to leave this world one of these days, and will have to give account of the life they have lived. Help them to understand something of Thy great mercy in providing Thy Son to be the Savior of all who will receive Him and believe, and grant that those who have become in anywise concerned may not further put off this matter of their personal salvation, but today, may receive Christ as theirs, and then confess Him, and then follow Him in a way that is worthy of their great Master. We ask it in His name. Amen.



Don't Just Do

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Christianity. As a result of the lack of knowledge, and as a result of the worldly nature of religion, and even the carnal influences which prevail in Christianity in our nation today, we find that there are many who say and do what they ought not, and make the Word of God and the Gospel of Christ into an unholy and human thing—a profane union between grace and works. They have no heavenly knowledge or godly understanding, and they substitute the words and works of men in order to make themselves busy in religion. There are also many others who do not say or do much of anything, perhaps because they are too lazy or too disinterested to really commit themselves to a religious cause. They only want to play at religion. These folks find no motivation to actively participate in a Christianity that they claim to

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Small Drops

By Joseph M. Sidders of
Temperance, Michigan

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God" (Deuteronomy 32:2-3).



ALL OF US ARE BUT ANGRY MEN

I recently watched one of my all-time favorite movies entitled "12 Angry Men," filmed in 1957. The basic premise of the movie is that a young man has been accused of murdering his father after an intense argument and is now on trial. If he is found guilty, he will receive the death penalty. The movie starts with the conclusion of the prosecution's case and the closing of the trial. Then it is time for the twelve jurors to convene and make a decision: guilty or not guilty. If there is any reasonable doubt, the jurors are required to return a verdict of 'not guilty.'

I am always struck by the way these twelve personalities are showcased. Each is so clearly defined by his individual life experiences. Every man brings his own prejudice into the case and his ability to decide a verdict. Each has somewhere else they would rather be or something else they would rather be doing. As a result, most in the room would just as soon make an easy decision as to have to stay in a room full of strangers doing something, they do not want to do any longer. The first vote is 11-1 in favor of 'guilty' with the one holdout explaining that he felt there was some reasonable doubt as to the guilt of this young man. He urged that, surely with a life hanging in the balance, they could afford to spend a little time talking about the case.

While watching this story

unfold, I realized that we no longer stay in a room with one another to discuss reasonable doubt between us. There is, indeed, plenty of reasonable (and unreasonable) doubt in the world, but how is it handled? In Amos 3:3 God's prophet says, "**Can two walk together, except they be agreed?**" The nation of Israel had a general disinterest in the things of God and no concern for holy living in His sight. They could not expect to walk with God while also continuing in sin and wickedness. Wedges of discord will always disrupt the journey.

Are we generally disinterested in one another? Do we make the easy decisions to avoid investing the time required for intentional connection? While knowledge is abundant in our society today, agreement is not always so easily attained. It is striking how convenient it is to scream our opinions at one another through social media, quickly unfollowing those who challenge us to think differently. Is it not reasonable to doubt our ability to be right about everything? It is wise, and possible, to guard your heart by God's measuring stick for your life, while also continuing to grow in knowledge and wisdom. How we treat those who disagree with us is important. Harsh reactions ruin our chance to influence others. We build up social media walls to solidify a world in which our opinion is king. On this hill beloved, our civilization will die.

I do not seek to ruin the movie's

end for you, but these jurors did not leave the room without a unanimous verdict. Each man learned to self-examine himself over a matter of life or death. May we all self-examine ourselves over the matter of life or death: our own walk with the Lord as well as the precious journey with friends, family members, and even those we disagree with.

May the Lord see fit to open our eyes...soon.

(Joseph Sidders is pastor of the Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Temperance, Michigan.)



Don't Just Do

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be a part of, and they therefore do not actively engage in a useful fashion. Perhaps, because they are too caught up in a pursuit of worldly pleasures, or are afraid to commit to a godly cause for fear of opposition or tribulation. However, there is a third class of people in the Kingdom of God on this earth today: these folks (though they are relatively few in number) are folks who will stand for the truth, and will seek after knowledge and understanding the things of God, and will speak and proclaim the truth that is found in the Word of God. These folks will also do what they believe is right in the sight of God, and will faithfully and diligently act upon the knowledge that is granted unto them. They will consistently engage in a pursuit of Jesus Christ, and an adherence to the leadership of the Holy Spirit of God.

I want you and me to consider our condition today. Are we just going through the motions, and doing whatever others might expect of a Christian? Are we saying and doing whatever it takes to be acknowledged by

others, just so it can be said that we are acting in a religious, moral, or faithful fashion? Or, do we find ourselves, sometimes, just laying back, allowing others to do the work, and allowing that God will accomplish His will whether we participate or not? Remember, today's Christian can be busy about unprofitable or worldly things that appear to be religious, and that person may still be useless in the cause of Christ. On the other hand, a person professing Christ today might also be lazy or fearful and be found to be also useless in the true service of our God and King. During the course of my sermon, I want to simply remind each of us of our need to say and do the right things as we work out our salvation that has been granted unto us.

SOME PEOPLE WILL SAY OR DO ANYTHING

The axiom that is the title of my sermon today, "Don't Just Do Something, Stand There," is meant to remind each of us that ours is a cause that takes some deliberation, that takes some dedication, and that inspires godliness and service in the lives of those who are saved. These are attitudes that are not often found in Christianity today. Notice in the first text passage, in Ephesians 4:14, that the Apostle Paul reminds us of the danger of being "**carried about with every wind of doctrine.**" To me, this describes those folks who will say or do anything, and they expect that God will accept their service, just for the sake of their supposed efforts that they have put forth. These folks want something to do that keeps them busy and contributing to their salvation, and the works that they do make them feel better

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Don't Just Do

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about their chances of going to Heaven, or pleasing God in some manner. These are the same folks that might say something like this: "We are all going to the same place. And there are many ways in which we can get there. So, you let me serve God as I see fit; and I will see you in Heaven." To me, these folks remind me of those that are described twice in the book of Judges: **"...every man did that which was right in his own eyes"** (Judges 17:6; 21:25). They say and do whatever seems right to them, and they imagine that God thinks well of them, and approves their service. These folks will find out one day that God only accepts a service that is rendered in a Scriptural and godly fashion!

In reality, these folks do not properly worship God at all even though, perhaps, there are some that might be saved amongst these that are called Christians. But, how can they serve God when they do only what is right in their own eyes? Solomon said this about those that will say or do anything and call it worship of God: **"Every way of a man is right in his own eyes; but the LORD pondereth the hearts"** (Prov. 21:2). If we do something, or say something, or worship in such a way that would be contrary to the Word of God; then let me tell you of a surety, God will ponder **"the hearts"** of those that render false worship!

The Apostle Paul warned Timothy of these folks that do not properly worship and serve God: **"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out**

of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Tim. 4:1-4). The world of Christianity today is full of folks that have **"itching ears."** There are entire denominations and cults and sects, within the wide range of so-called Christianity, which have turned **"away their ears from the truth,"** and have been **"turned unto fables"** and the traditions and teachings of men. These folks will say and do just about anything, and all the while, stand for nothing! They endorse sins and heresies, and falsely proclaim that God not only tolerates their sins, but even endorses or encourages it! They say and do what they want and substitute their words and their ways for the words and ways of God.

In the Old Testament the prophet Jeremiah delivered the Word of God unto Israel, in which are found these very telling comments which are directed toward the children of Israel: **"Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you. For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich. They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right**

of the needy do they not judge. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof" (Jer. 5:25-31)? To me, this is an amazingly accurate description of today's Christianity! Here we see a description of the televangelists and the mega-churches and the feel-good ministries of the motivational speakers that call themselves "preachers." Surely these folks **"are become great, and waxen rich."** Surely these ministries and evangelical movements **"are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper."** The worldwide prosperity of Catholicism and Christianity (which in many circles is one and the same) ought to prove unto us, as Baptists, that there is not any good left in these religions and denominations.

The Apostle John warned his readers, **"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that**

is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (I John 4:1-6). Some folks, even now, are led away by the spirits of error and the spirits of anti-Christ. These folks will be washed about with the winds of false doctrine and heresy, and they are liable to believe anything, and preach anything, and promote anything as long as some false spirit will lead them along. We ought not to be surprised by these things, for it has always been this way. Even in the time of Paul and John the Beloved, and all the other Apostles, and amongst all the early churches, there was the need to warn one another of the proliferation of the trust in the words and works of men, as opposed to the words and works of God.. And, if these things were so then, how much more are they true now?

SOME PEOPLE WILL NOT SAY OR DO ANYTHING

Our second text passage, in Ephesians 6:13-18, exhorts us in the duty that we all have to stand in the cause of Christ. Remember, the title of my message reminds us that we can not just do something (or anything), but we have to stand. Well, in the second part of our sermon, I want us to notice that, just as there are certain people who will believe and say and do just about anything (and expect that God will receive them and their indispensable contributions to their salvation); there are also certain folks that will not say or do anything at all, and these folks still expect that

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Brief Truths

By Randy Johnson of
Texarkana, Texas



"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Ephesians 1:13).

LIBERTY

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1).

I would like to thank God for our freedom. Freedom is a beautiful and glorious thing to have. No one that has ever had a taste of freedom should ever want to be in bondage ever again. As Americans we have experienced a freedom that others in the world have never known. We sure ought to thank God for our liberty because everything good starts with God. **"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"** (James 1:17).

Our forefathers came to this new land in search of liberty and to escape bondage. However, for that freedom people had to die and so many did die. Their fight was for freedom. Every war we have ever fought has been for freedom, because freedom must be fought for and blood must be shed. Contrary to what some say, freedom is worth the fight and worth the bloodshed. Therefore, I would like to thank God for all the brave men and women who have died in our great nation for freedom at home and around the world. I thank the families of those who have lost loved ones in wars, we cannot experience your loss nor your pain, but we can and do say thank you. I thank God for the braveness of those who has served and those who

were wounded for the fight for our freedom. When we celebrate our nations Independence Day, let us not forget those who fought, those who were wounded, and those who died to deliver and sustain our glorious freedom.

Now I want to talk about another freedom, not one celebrated by the American people only but by the world. Even for those who might be in worldly bondage today, can have the freedom that God gives, and that freedom is only found in one man, Jesus Christ. This freedom is the freedom of sin and death. The Apostle Paul wrote **"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free..."** (Gal. 5:1).

Jesus Christ by His own death, His own blood being shed, brought to all who believe on Him, freedom from sin, the power of sin, and serving sin. We through this freedom have no slavery to sin, it has no power over us. Lost people will serve sin all their life never understanding what freedom truly is. But we through the grace of God, who have this freedom, no longer have to serve sin. All we have to do is to resist the temptations of sin and choose to serve God. **"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD"** (Josh. 24:15). This Scripture has nothing to do

with choosing salvation, but rather waking-up every day, thanking God, and choosing to serve Him instead of Satan and sin. The worst thing a saved person can do is to serve sin over God. Moses gave us this warning, **"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil...In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them"** (Deut. 30:15-17). Paul said in our text Scripture **"...be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."** So, let us all remember and enjoy the freedom we have in this world, but let us also remember and enjoy the freedom we have as Christians. Let us all work to serve the Lord, His commandments, which is His Word. Do not fall back into bondage and allow Satan to lead you away from your service to the very God and Saviour who gave you freedom.

(Randy Johnson is pastor of the Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Texarkana, Texas.)



BIBLE CONUNDRUMS

(These initials form part of a parable recorded in one of the Gospels.)

An archer who lived in the wilderness.
An Apostle.
A son of Reuel.
The name of a disciple whom Paul loved.
The mount of God.
One of the seven Churches.
The sister of Lotan.
One who delivered his brother.
A son of Amaziah.
The mother of a disciple.
The drink given to Jesus while on the cross.
The people whom God led by an unknown way.
A captain who was a leper.
One whom children mocked.

Don't Just Do

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God will save them, and expect that Jesus Christ has died for their sins!

In regards to those folks that just drift along, and do not ever show any signs of love or devotion unto God, let me tell you what John the Baptist had to say: **"Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire"** (Luke 3:7-9). I suppose, that in some ways, this second classification of Christianity might be worse than the first. At least, amongst those which we first noticed, there was some considerable effort put forth even if it was only motivated by some false idea of works for salvation, or some human speculation in religion. But, in this second classification of Christianity, we notice a group of people who will not do any works at all, and do not seek to contribute in a positive way to the Kingdom of God. These people seem to believe that they just inherently deserve the salvation and the goodness of God, and once they are saved, there are no longer any expectations of duty or responsibility in the service of God. These folks are not active or useful in Christianity. They name

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the name of Christ, but have no zeal or desire for Him. They do not stand up for Him; they do not contend for Him; they do not seek the good of others in Christianity. A mere declaration of belief in God is not enough! A true child of God will not only profess Jesus as the Christ, they will go about sharing the Gospel with others, and will make a sincere effort to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and the example of service that He set.

I believe that these lazy and indolent folks are those that suggest to us today, that God loves everybody, and could not ever bear to send some to Hell, at least not if you confess Jesus as your Saviour. What I mean, is that there are some folks that believe that, if Jesus Christ came to save, then we can live any which way that we want, and we can just rest on our laurels and expect that, either, Christ will save us because He has ordained to do so (Hard-Shell Baptists); or, that Christ will eventually save all of mankind, because He is the God of love, and could not ever commit so horrible a deed as to damn men to Hell! Perhaps we could say that this is the belief of those that adhere to the teachings of antinomianism. Therefore these folks believe that they do not have any requirements laid upon them, because God has freed them from the duty to obey or keep the Law; and God has therefore necessarily freed them from the duty to say or do anything good in the cause of Christ.

However, let me remind you of the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, that He spoke to those that claimed that they had a desire to follow Him and to worship God:

“And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:57-62). To me, it seems plain from this passage of Scripture, that God would not ever call any man to salvation, if that man were not intended to say and do some things in the service of Christ. Every man is expected to **“put his hand to the plough;”** and, in fact, a man that will not wholly commit himself to the cause of Christ, and properly worship and serve God is not **“fit for the kingdom of God.”**

SOME PEOPLE WILL STAND

The first two classifications of people we have noticed, even those amongst Christianity, must, inevitably fall. For, either they will be willing to say or do just about anything, and therefore they will fall into heresy and condemnation, and will end up believing and acting contrary to the Scriptures. Or, they will not say or do anything much at all, imagining that God has no duties for them, or that God has saved them once, and there is nothing else needed of them. They therefore will have no works that

are meet for repentance.

But, here at the end of my sermon, I want us to notice that last classification of people, those that are the true children of God and, even more particularly, those that are the faithful and useful servants from amongst the churches of Jesus Christ. Let us remember the axiom (or counter-axiom) that is the title of my message, **“Don’t just do something, stand there.”** Some folks (as we have already noticed) will stand for anything at all; and some other folks (as we have already noticed) will not stand for anything; but, the persons that seek to truly worship God, will stand for THE THING (the Word of God), and they will stand firm for the Word of God, and for the ministry of Jesus Christ! These same folks, by and large, are those that are the faithful members of the churches of Jesus Christ. In the churches of Jesus Christ, we do not stand for everything or nothing. We stand for something and Someone. The churches of Jesus Christ are the pillar and the ground of the truth.

In the first letter to the Corinthian church, Paul spoke of the duty that we have to stand, and to contend, and to believe: **“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you”** (I Cor. 11:1-2). Here, in a church that so many Christians ridicule or belittle, we find that Paul offers them **“praise,”** and commends them, and encourages them, because they had evidently made it a habit to **“remember”** Paul **“in all things, and keep the ordinances, as”** Paul **“delivered them to”** them.

I believe these are also the type of folks that Paul wrote to in the church of Thessalonica: **“But**

we are bound to give thanks always 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. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.” (II Thess. 2:13-17). Here the Apostle Paul is exhorting the church in Thessalonica to **“stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught.”** He reminds them that there was a task and a duty which was laid upon them. They could not just follow any gospel or any Christ but, they had to follow the Lord Jesus and His gospel. And, they could not lay their duties down, but they must persevere! We must **“stand,”** we must **“keep,”** we must **“contend,”** we must continue in the Word of God, and in the service where unto we are called.

CONCLUSION

I believe that we all, as members of the churches of Jesus Christ, ought to be willing to stand up and be counted, as those that believe in the Word of God, and as those that are worshippers and followers of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, the Lord God of Israel looked for such men and women, and many times He did not find them: **“Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained**

Little Valleys

By Timothy J. Hille of
Ashland, Illinois

"He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills." (Psalms 104:10).



A BLESSED NATION

It seems appropriate to focus on the subject of our nation, given the approaching anniversary of our nation's independence. Few of us know the details of the history behind the many freedoms and blessings we have enjoyed as a nation for the past two hundred and thirty-four years. For instance, children in the public school system are not generally taught that Thomas Jefferson studied and came to admire democracy by viewing the congregational democracy of a Baptist church of his day. Many of the founding fathers thought it impossible to establish a nation without a national religion or state church; but the Virginia Baptists and others influenced the constitutional congress so that we now enjoy as a first principle and fundamental right the freedom of religion and conscience. I do not have to attend any particular church or support it with my taxes, as was the case in the old European nations and even a number of the American colonies. You cannot be banished from a city, town, village, or county, or be imprisoned, fined, or whipped, if you do not have your children baptized by the state-sponsored church. These freedoms were unknown to many people who lived less than three centuries ago. They are freedoms that are still unknown in some parts of the world. We enjoy these freedoms today in the United States of America because of the prayers and labors of some Bible-believing people who came before us.

"Blessed is the nation whose

God is the LORD (Jehovah)" (Ps. 33:12). America was undeniably founded upon Biblical principles. Any nation whose people revere, honor, and obey the true and living God, whose Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to die for sinners on the cross of Calvary, will be blessed providentially. We are told that the most important issue facing our nation is economic, ecological, or educational in nature. In reality, the most important issue facing our nation is spiritual. When men's hearts are right with God, then and only then can they expect His blessings. Sadly, our nation's citizens in the main have turned their hearts toward other gods than the Creator and Redeemer of men. Our gods today, or idols as they may be properly called, are found on the stock markets, sports fields, concert stages, recreational landscapes, and political pulpits. Money, pleasure, preeminence, indulgence, and selfish convenience determine our course more so than trust in the One whose name we print on our currency and coins and recite in the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag.

If Jehovah, the God of the Bible, is not our God whom we worship, serve, trust and obey in our daily lives, then can we expect His blessings? I daresay no. We must look to our idols for our blessings - for peace, prosperity, safety, healing, comfort, and guidance. Will they save us in our hour of need? Will they show us the way when we are lost in troubles of our own making and troubles sent upon us by divine appointment?

Will our souls be filled with peace and contentment by serving these gods? If we would have the blessings of the Lord, then He must be our God. **"Happy is that people, whose God is the LORD (Jehovah)"** (Ps. 144:15).

AN EXALTED NATION

Let us once again focus on our nation, given the recent observance of our national day of independence. Our nation has, thus far, enjoyed a short but lofty existence. More so than any other nation, we truly are "the land of opportunity." And yet, the greatest necessity of all is being disregarded by the largest part of our populace, the need to walk with God in righteousness and truth. Most of our ancient patriot hymns, and the recorded words of our founding fathers, exhibit the truth that apart from following God our nation cannot long continue or enjoy peace, prosperity, and unity. At present, these three blessings seem to be in jeopardy for future generations. We are told by some that the cause of the division, unrest, and strife that currently troubles our nation is merely political. Others inform us that the answer to our current national disunity and the prevalence of crimes and social ills lies in money, and that folks merely need more. God's Word contains a different answer.

Can a nation enjoy peace? Can a nation enjoy unity? Can a nation prosper? I believe the answer is yes; but I also believe that the answer must be qualified by saying, "Not without being right with God." **"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people"** (Prov. 14:34). Righteousness cannot be legislated, though our legislatures should enact only just and moral laws. Laws alone do not make a

nation right with God, but a people whose hearts are right with God will want right laws in their land. When righteousness is replaced by selfishness; truth by prevailing circumstances; and the Bible by economics and entertainment, we can expect only corruption and ruin.

The character of a nation is merely a reflection of the character of its citizens. By and large in our nation, God's name is used as a curse word or a campaign slogan. Children learn to cuss before they learn to use the bathroom. Schools teach recycling to save the planet, but refuse to pray to the Creator of heaven and earth. Most marriages are broken before they ever begin, and are not held as being what **"God hath joined together"** (Matt. 19:6) so that man dare not put it asunder. Churches are led by people who never evidenced the call of God, but who merely chose "the ministry" as a profession. Churches are filled with people who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior, but who merely are seeking a religiously-based social experience.

The second Psalm records God's message to the world's nations and leaders. **"Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him"** (Ps. 2:10-12). May our present generation turn to the Lord in humility, and not be counted in the list of **"all the nations that forget God"** (Ps. 9:17).

(Timothy J. Hille is pastor of the Pleasant Plains Baptist Church of Pleasant Plains, Illinois.)



The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Could you please comment on the first part **“While the earth remaineth”** in Genesis 8:22?

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The context of Genesis chapter eight reveals that God had caused the waters of the world wide flood to recede. This was done so that the inhabitants of the ark could go forth upon the earth to fulfill the mandate to multiply and replenish the earth. Every living thing had been destroyed in the flood, and now it was time to repopulate the earth.

This mandate to multiply upon the earth (Gen. 8:17) is accompanied by a promise often identified as the Noahic Covenant, wherein God promises to never again destroy every living thing by way of cataclysmic upheaval. In order to fulfill this promise, God tells Noah in our text that He will provide seasonal and predictable cycles as long as the earth in its present form remains. This promise insures a measure of stability for man and beast to flourish and survive. In essence, God declares that He will effectively manage and control the climate and the environment through predictable seasons. Henry Morris put it this way:

“Thus, that regularity of nature which modern scientists have formalized as their ‘principle of uniformity’ was

instituted by God after the Flood. The seasons, heat and cold, day and night, are now controlled primarily by the sun, which actually supplies all the energy for the earth’s physical processes. The earth’s orbital revolution about the sun, its axial rotation and inclination, and its marvelous atmosphere also help establish these constants of nature, which in turn control most other geological processes. Thus the promised uniformity of the seasons and the daily cycle implies the essential uniformity of all other natural processes. It is, of course, only these present processes which modern scientists can actually observe, describe, and analyze. The present—not the past or the future—is the proper domain of true science” (*The Genesis Record*, p. 219).

Interestingly enough, this promise to provide the predictable measure of stability for the earth will continue as long as the earth remains in its present composition. This implies that there is coming a day when the earth in its present form would be changed. Keeping with His promise, God will not effect the change as He once did through a world wide flood, but rather by purifying fire. After the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ with His saints upon the earth, after the resurrection of the unjust dead and the Great White Throne Judgment, God will purge the entire universe of all that defiles (II Pet. 3:10-13). The result of this great

purgation of all that defiles will eliminate all remnants of the curse and the effects of the cataclysmic flood. In effect, the earth will be regenerated by the power of God, resulting in a **“new heaven and a new earth”** (Rev. 21:1) **“wherein dwelleth righteousness”** (II Pet. 3:13). This renovated and regenerated earth will be the dwelling place of God’s elect throughout the eternal ages, thus fulfilling all the covenant promises relating to God’s everlasting kingdom upon the earth. The Noahic, Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants are all intricately connected and precisely fulfilled in order to accomplish God’s ultimate purpose for the earth which He created.

I like the way Michael Vlach, the author of *He Will Reign Forever* makes the connection of the Noahic Covenant with God’s eternal purpose for the earth:

“God declares He will never destroy the earth again with a flood. And He guarantees to preserve the stability of nature. This promise must have been assuring since it guaranteed the uniformity of nature and opportunity for man to function without the threat of global catastrophe. As long as ‘the earth remains’ humans can rely on the cycle of seasons. Not only is this promise a blessing to all of creation, it will allow for God’s kingdom and salvation plans to unfold in history. Thus, the Noahic Covenant functions as the platform for God’s plans to play out. It is also the basis for the other biblical covenants that will follow. God’s concern for creation also points toward the future restoration of all things when the totality of the curse will be removed” (pages 72-73).

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“And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD... And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Gen. 8:20-22).

In verse 21, the Lord declares that He will not again **“curse the ground** (earth) **anymore for man’s sake.”** The thrust of this passage is that the Lord will not continue to repeatedly “smite” the entire earth in every generation for the continuous folly of mankind. The penultimate curse and destruction was seen in Genesis 7:21-22, **“And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.”** The Lord’s promise in our text promises that His longsuffering will be on display, **“while the earth remaineth”** in its current state. Selah! Think about it!

When Noah stepped out of the ark, the earth had changed dramatically. The vapor girdle of Genesis 1:6, Job 38:9, etc, was gone

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Who are the “many” and who are the “chosen” in Matthew 22:14?

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We usually use the terms “general call” and “effectual call.” This call is given to all who will hear the gospel. “Many” hear it, “few” respond to it. Those who respond to it are the “chosen,” the elect that were chosen before the foundation of the world. **“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved”** (Eph. 1:4-6).

The effectual call is the supernatural drawing of God which Jesus speaks of in John 6:44, **“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”** Here a general call is in view, and this extends to all who hear the gospel—this call is the great **“whosoever will”** of the gospel. **“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”** (Rev. 22:17). Here, then, is the proper balance

between human responsibility and divine sovereignty: the **“called”** who reject the invitation do so willingly, and therefore their exclusion from the kingdom is perfectly just. The **“chosen”** enter the kingdom only because of the grace of God in choosing and drawing them.

This is a hard concept to understand. That is why many believe all men have the chance to be saved. This is a false doctrine. They also believe in the free will of man, which is also a false doctrine and false teaching. To have a better understanding of this I would encourage you, dear reader, to read *Sovereign Grace And Man's Responsibility* by C. H. Spurgeon. This should help in understanding that the only way a person can be saved is by the grace of God. God Bless!

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“For many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt. 22:14). The word **“for”** connects this verse as an application to The Parable of the Marriage Feast (22:1-13). The context reveals that many were called to the marriage feast but refused to come (22:3-7). Others were bidden by the servants and brought to the feast consisting of both bad and good people (22:9-10). One of the guests who was called or bidden

to come was exposed as not having on a wedding garment. He was abruptly separated from the feast and cast into outer darkness where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth, signifying judgment (22:13).

When the servants were bidden to go out and invite guests to the marriage feast of the king it appeared to be a call for anyone who wanted to come to come. Those who came were identified as being good and bad. The one and only qualifier to join in on the festivities was a proper wedding garment. Where did these good and bad people obtain the proper wedding garment? Many were no doubt poor, others probably responded to the call on the spur of the moment. Could it be possible that the king was the one who provided his guests with the proper garments? All the other folks were clothed with the proper wedding attire, except this one man, who for whatever reason refused to wear the garment. When he was asked why he refused the proper attire he was speechless. The king immediately ordered him to be bound and removed from the marriage feast and cast into the darkness where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The application to the kingdom of heaven (22:2) appears to be a simple one. God has commanded His servants to go out and proclaim the message of the Gospel throughout all the world, declaring that faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way you can be admitted into the presence of God. This general call is universal in scope, extending to all nations, kindreds, tribes, and languages. It goes out to Jews and Gentiles alike. **“Many”** are called via this general call. However,

“few” in comparison to the many, are chosen by God to abide in the presence of the King, clothed with the imputed righteousness of Christ, the garments of salvation (Isa. 61:10). **“Many”** are called but relatively **“few”** submit to the dictates and requirements of the King. The **“many”** refuse the garments provided by the King because they are self willed and self righteous. They mistakenly think they can come into the presence of the King on their own terms and with their own attire. They will be judged for their willful rebellion by being cast into the outer darkness for all eternity in the Lake of Fire. However, God's elect who have been chosen in Christ before the world began, are effectually called and most willingly submit to His Lordship. These **“few”** have been freely given Christ's spotless righteousness by way of imputation and justification. Hence, they are identified as being **“accepted in the beloved”** by way of sovereign, unconditional electing grace and redeemed by the blood of the everlasting covenant (Eph. 1:3-7). Grace in Christ is the only reason they are granted the privilege of being in the presence of the King as the eternal ages roll.

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The simplest answer to this salvational passage is that the Gospel, or outward call goes to “many/called,” but the inward, regenerative call, is only heard by the “few/chosen.” The heart

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Forum Question #1

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and the ages of men spectacularly fell from 900+ years rapidly over the next few generations to 600, 400, 200 and even less, as they were exposed to direct, unfiltered sunlight. Certainly, with this great change, this promise that the Lord was still in control would have brought great comfort to God's people over the next 12 generations to Jacob, despite their shortened earthly tenures: **"And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers..."** (Gen. 47:9).

"While the earth remaineth" in her current dispensation, God hereby promises to protect the earth and the blessings of seasonal cycles **"shall not cease."** How marvelous is the grace of our great God! The continuous return of spring after winter, of even day after night is thusly guaranteed by our merciful God. Even as He notes the awful condition of man's total depravity, and that our imaginations will generationally be **"evil,"** He declares that His perseverance will delay a holy and proper judgment, until a decreed time in the future. However, the very phrase, **"while the earth remaineth"** implies an end. Particularly of a future time when it will NOT remain **"as is."** **"While"** it remains! Selah! Think about it!

That God has an **"end"** appointed is one of the more prominent themes of Scripture. Matthew 24:3, **"...what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"** In this prescient chapter, we see events

that are not the end, (vs. 6 & 8), but then clearly see that the rapture is what the Lord calls **"the end"** in vs. 13-14, **"But he that shall endure unto the end (of the world), the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end (of the world) come."**

The rapture of the saints ends the **"latter days"** and kicks off a period of time known variously as **"the day of the Lord"** or **"day of Christ,"** which includes judgmental events such as Daniel's Seventieth Week, **"Millennial Reign,"** **"Wedding of the Lamb,"** **"Battle of Armageddon,"** etc... During these times after the **"end of the world as we know it,"** the promise of **"while the earth remaineth"** holds no force and the **"natural cycles of nature"** will be stretched, tortured, even disrupted, and no security will be found in the familiar routine of **"normal"** earth life. **"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise"** (Rev. 8:12).

The final repercussion of our text that **"while the earth remaineth"** intimates a permanent change is the Bible's many prophesies of a **"new earth."** **"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. ...And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. ...And the gates of it shall not be shut at**

all by day: for there shall be no night there" (Rev. 21:1, 23, 25). Lots of fabulous new glories are yet to be revealed in a new earth, but while **"this one"** remaineth-Nature continueth apace. Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (II Peter 3:10-12).

I believe this is a promise from God, that as long as the earth surface remains the same as it is right now and all the elements around us remain the same, **"seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."**

The above Scriptures tell us that there is a time coming though when the elements will be burned up. Some believe that the whole earth will simply blow up, but it will be the surface of the earth that will be purged with fire, and everything you now see will be gone. Some say this could

be an atomic bomb that totally destroys the service of the earth, and that could be so, but it will be by God's hand if it will happen that way.

The verse of Scripture in Genesis 8:22 is referring to the many alterations from the global flood, God is now reestablishing the cycle of seasons after the catastrophic interruption. Everyone I am sure would agree, that the flood changed many things. Remember that it had never rained until God sent the rain! I think that was a major interruption to everything. If we go back to II Peter 3 and look at verses 5-7 where Peter said, **"For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."**

So, when the heavens are on fire and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, there will be no more **"seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."** God's wrath will be poured out upon the **"ungodly men"** and the time for retribution will be upon them and the earth.

Once the earth is purged by fire, all things will start to grow and the earth will be replenished once again, and be prepared for us to live on again. Heaven is not our final resting place, but the new earth will be, think of it as the garden of Eden, how God had made it originally, beautiful!

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Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of
Plant City, Florida



SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON - BIBLE SURVEY #15 EVE

TEXT: Gen. 3:20

DEVOTIONAL READING: Gen. 2:18-25

AIM: An Over-view of the Life of Eve

INTRODUCTION— We now take a look at Eve, Adam's wife.

I. FACTS: Eve is the first woman (I Tim. 2:13). She was created by God (Gen. 2:22). There is no record of her death. She was married to Adam (Gen. 2:23; 3:20). She had 3 sons named: Cain, Abel, Seth; yet we are told that she had other sons and daughters (Gen. 5:4). Eve = "life" or "living."

II. MADE TO BE THE FIRST WIFE: Eve's special place in creation was as an help meet for Adam (Gen. 2:15-24). She was made to be especially and particularly suitable for the man, to be both compatible with him as well as intimate with him. She was made to share life with him, its toils and labors, as well as its joys and blessings. As man was the crown of God's creation woman was the crown of man (Prov. 12:4; I Cor. 11:7-9). Matthew Henry wrote: "The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved."

Notice, that marriage was instituted before the fall of sin. Jesus stated that marriage is between a man and a woman; supersedes all other earthly relationships; is for life; and that it is considered a covenant in the eyes of God (Matt. 19:3-12). We should seek God's will in marriage: if we marry; who we marry; and when we marry. Marriage is the foundation of a home and family; is God's creation, and, when entered in obedience to God and blessed by God, is the happiest human relationship that can be known in this life (Heb. 13:4; Prov. 18:22; Eccl. 9:9). Following the commandments to honor one's parents, and to do no harm nor injury to another, is the commandment to uphold the fidelity of marriage (Ex. 20:12-14)—showing the Divine regard for the marriage covenant, and the regard which all should have for it.

III. FIRST IN TRANSGRESSING: Gen. 3:1-13; I Tim. 2:13,14—Eve was deceived by the devil, who lied to her. The devil attacked Eve with falsehood in order to cause her and Adam to stumble. We must be careful that we are not the cause of others stumbling in sin—for our influence is a responsibility before God (Rom. 14:7-13; Matt. 18:7-14). God will hold us accountable for leading others astray or discouraging others from doing what is right.

Eve followed her own reasoning (Gen. 3:6). The devil often appeals to our reasoning with his lies. Thus, our reasoning must always be surrendered to God's Word (Prov. 3:5-6; Ps. 19:12-13; Prov. 14:12; II Cor. 5:7; Ps. 119:105-106, 128). When the devil appealed to Christ's reasoning, Christ replied with the Word of God: "It is written" Matt. 4:1-11.

Because of sin, the joy of child-bearing is now accompanied with pain and sorrow, and the wife has a natural inclination to get out from under the subordination to her husband (Gen. 3:16). Eve had led her husband to sin. Since that time, women have sought to get out from under their Divinely

appointed place (Eph. 5:23-24; I Tim. 2:11-15). The world has declared that it is a dishonor to women that they should be subordinate to men; but doing what God says with a humble, cheerful, and obedient heart always results in honor from Him (I Peter 3:1-6). In child bearing/rearing, bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, training them up in the way they should go, and teaching them to set their hope in God is also a blessing when done God's way.

IV. FIRST TO RECEIVE A DIVINE PROMISE: Gen. 3:14-15—Connected with the curse was the promise of redemption. Thru the seed of the woman, one who would be born, would come deliverance from sin and death (all the effects of following the serpent's lies). Though child-bearing would be accompanied by pain and sorrow, yet it was thru child-bearing that God would bring forth the One who would bruise the serpent's head (Isa. 7:14; 9:6-7; Gal. 4:4-5). Just as Eve relied and claimed the promise of God, so ought we. She counted her children as having come from God, and she wanted them to know God and trust Him (Ps. 127:3) (and not just for salvation either). Too many mothers have been content to merely give birth to children, and have not brought their children up in the fear and love of God. Too many stop after salvation and do NOT teach their children to live/walk by faith or worship the Lord as Eve did.

V. FIRST TO EXPERIENCE A BROKEN HOME: Gen. 4:25—No doubt Eve's heart was broken when her son forsook God and slew his brother Abel. Many mothers blame themselves when their children do wrong. Yet, Eve did not add sin unto sin by forsaking God herself; but continued to trust in Him, and look for His promises (Gen. 4:25). While we must repent of our failings in child-rearing, we must also take our broken-heartedness to God, for He heals the broken-hearted (Ps. 147:1-3,11).

VI. FIRST TYPE OF BRIDE OF CHRIST: Gen. 2:23—As the church is the body of Christ, so too Eve came from the body of the first Adam. Observe as well, that Eve was espoused to Adam by God; so too the church to Christ (Eph. 5:23-27; II Cor. 11:2-3; Rev. 19:7-10). As Eve bore children, so the church by the power of Christ brings forth God's children through the preaching of the Gospel, the seed, the Word of God (Matt. 18:19; Mark 4:14) accompanied by the work of the Holy Spirit. With no record of her death, we find a type of the church's perpetuity (Matt. 16:18).

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Forum #1

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"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself

shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:1-4).

All one has to do is see the chaos that we have today, and how mankind has pretty much destroyed this once beautiful earth, God will make it clean once again. God Bless!

ROGER REED



Forum Question #2

(Continued from page 13) ♦

of sovereign grace is that God has elected/chosen His sheep (Eph.1:4); Christ has justified those chosen (Isa. 53:11); and the Holy Spirit regenerates a new birth (Titus 3:5) within those same chosen. Selah! Think about it!

That the passage in Matthew 22 is referring to saved vs lost, is validated by the reference in verse 13 to a Hellish destination for the merely "called." It continues the theme of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, where there is a "strait/narrow" gate for the few (in contrast) elect, while the "broad/wide" gate is where the multitudes of the simple, the ignorant, and the arrogant prideful exit this world. (Matt. 7:13-14)

A contrast to our text, however, is found in parables that deal with service after our salvation. As we focus on the persons that are elected/chosen unto salvation, we find scripture that reveals an elect within the elect, as it were. Some, like the apostles, are set apart for more sanctified service, by the grace of God. **"And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles"** (Luke 6:13). As the vineyard laborers (all saved) also find out in Matthew 20:13-16: **"But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen."** In this parable of service, there is no

allusion to Hell, but there is a distinction made between merely "called" laborers, and a further distinction of "chosen" laborers for weightier services.

That some are "called" children of God, but not "chosen" to particular labors is undeniable in Scripture. **"Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this"** (I Sam. 16:8). But we see the "chosen" one in verse 13, when David is both called and chosen as the future King. Constantly, we find God "choosing" within His "called" for His purposes and machinations. The nation of Israel is persistently referred to thusly. **"For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth"** (Deut. 7:6). Does this mean that none others upon the "face of the earth" were saved? Of course not! God has a chosen elect, within the family elect, to accomplish His purposes and they will be revealed in His time.

The Lord's New Testament church fulfills this overt election of God, yet again. **"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord"** (Eph. 3:9-11). God has not set all of the family of God into the Baptist churches in our time. Surely He is in charge of setting them in, but He has not chosen

all for this task, has he? **"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. ...And God hath set some in the church..."** (I Cor. 12: 18, 28). Have you been scripturally baptized into the Body of Christ by the Big Creek Baptist Church, or another one of His local bodies? **"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls"** (Acts 2:41). What about those that received the word, but were not baptized? Not added to the elect within the elect. Called, but not chosen? That is what the Bible says!

It is to be noted that some that are called/saved and chosen/set in the church are later on found "unfaithful" and church discipline is required to purge them out (I Cor. 5:7; II Thess. 3:6, 14) of this precious institution. To finally attain unto this great grace of being in the Bride of Christ is then summed up in Revelation 17:14: **"...and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."** Three categorical distinctions are made here that must be dealt with. What is the difference? The God-ordained levels of sanctification and consecration in this present world of service. 1) Many are called/saved- Hallelujah! 2) Some of the called are chosen/ baptized- Glory to God! 3) And a sanctified few of those chosen are found faithful/bridal, elevated by the grace of God to be at one with Christ in New Jerusalem- Praise Him, Praise Him! Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



Don't Just Do

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upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken. The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none" (Ezek. 22:24-30).

I pray to God that it would not be so in our day and time, and in our place and in our generation. I hope and pray that God will find, within the churches of Jesus Christ, some folks that are willing to stand in the cause of Christ. The world of Christianity is full of people that will say or do anything; and the world of Christianity also has an abundance of folks that

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Don't Just Do

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will not say or do anything at all. But, if the Lord is willing, I pray that He would make us to be those faithful servants that will only say and do the things that will please our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Maybe we could look also at it this way. There are some folks that believe that God needs all of the help that He can get, and they will say or do anything to help Him out. There are other folks that believe that God has done it all already, and that He does not require any responsibility on the part of man. But, there are still some left in this world today, that teach and preach a sovereign God, that requires that men will stand up for Him, and worship and serve Him in the manner prescribed in the Holy Word of God. These are the folks that will carry the Gospel to every land and every people, knowing that God is sovereign, but also knowing that God requires that we preach and teach so that men can believe and serve.

As we finish this sermon, ask the Lord what He would have you to do; and ask the Lord to give you the words that you need for every occasion. I believe that He will hear you, and will show you the way. If we rely on the leadership of the Holy Spirit, we will not fall into the snares of the wicked, and be drawn away to believe just anything. On the other hand, if we rely on the leadership of the Holy Spirit, we will not be prone to sit around and do nothing at all. Our goal must be to stand and while we are standing, do the work and will of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



An Exposition of Job 19:25

Part Three

By Joseph Caryl
(1602 - 1673)

"And that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth"

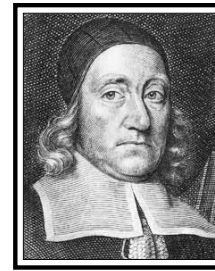
These words contain the second Article of Job's holy confession; As if he had said, I do not only believe that my Redeemer liveth, but **"that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."**

The word which we translate to **"stand"** signifies to rise up to stand, or to be erected, or lifted up, and hence *Fecum* (from the same root) is used by Moses (Gen. 7:4) to signify, **"every living substance"** so we translate, **"For yet seven days, saith the Lord, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made, (or every thing that standeth up or subsisteth) will I destroy..."** A living body standeth up, in opposition to which a dead body is (in all the learned languages) expressed by a word that signifieth **"falling down"**; a dead body is a falling body," a body fallen to the earth from whence it was first raised; or it is **"flesh given to the worms,"** as some make the Latin word found, by a nice distinction of earth syllable to a word.

Now, saith Job, **"...my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day..."** Jesus Christ was a **"falling body,"** when He died; but He conquered death, and **"became a standing body again, and shall stand."**

"At the latter day upon the earth."

The Hebrew is, **"last or latter upon the earth,"** our translators added the word **"day"** in a different letter, both to distinguish it from the express terms of the original



Text, as also to determine what they apprehended as the proper sense and scope of the place.

The **"latter or last days"** in Scripture are taken three ways.

First, More generally for the time following, or for hereafter. That which the Prophet Joel expresseth thus; **"It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh..."** (Joel 2:28), is cited by the Apostle (Acts 2:17) **"And it shall come to pass in the last days..."**

Secondly, The **"latter days"** contain all Gospel time, or all that time elapsed since Christ came and was revealed in the flesh, which, though the Gospel was published presently after the fall, (Gen. 3:15), is strictly called the Gospel-time, in opposition to the legal administrations. So we may understand the old Patriarch Jacob (Gen. 49:1). When he called unto his sons and said, **"Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days"**; that is, **"at the coming of the Messiah, or when Shiloh comes,"** as he speaketh (v. 10). Though with-all Jacob intends there a prophecy to his sons of their state in all the times following or as the Hebrew elegancy expresseth it; **"In the posterity of days, which Scripture phrase notes also any or all time to come, as was taught before. Thus the Apostle speaks of 'the latter times' (I Tim. 4:1) and of 'the last days' (II Tim. 3:1). These days are called last; First, because all was then consummated, which**

was prophesied concerning the work of man's redemption, and so is the perfection of all times, or as the Apostle calls it (Gal. 4:4) **"The fulness of time."**

Secondly, because the whole time of the world's continuance being distinguished into three great periods, the Gospel time is the last of the three. The first, was from the Creation to the giving of the Law upon Mount Sinai. The second, from the giving of the Law till the appearance of Christ in our Nature. The third, from that appearance in humility, till His appearance in Glory. These are, **"the latter days."**

Thirdly, As the **"whole Gospel time"** is called the **"last time,"** or **"the latter days,"** so, there is a **"latter day"** or a **"last time"** (I Pet. 1:5) which is more special and particular, and that is the day of **"the Resurrection,"** or the **"day of judgment,"** which we may call the last of the latter days. Under both which notions the words may be taken here, first as referring to the coming of Christ in the flesh to redeem us from death; secondly, to the coming of Christ in glory to **"raise the dead,"** and to judge both quick and dead.

Further, As this word **"last"** or **"latter,"** is expounded with reference to a time, so to a person.

And thus it is taken two ways.

First, Some refer it to the person of Job, and join the words **"on the earth,"** not with the word **"stand,"** but with the word **"last,"** giving the sense thus: **"I know that my redeemer liveth,"** and the last (man) upon the earth shall stand, that is, he who is last, lowest, or meanest upon the earth, meaning himself (Job speaks of himself in the third person (say they) the more to move compassion) shall stand upon the earth freed from the bondage of these afflictions,

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Job 19:25

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under which now he groaneth, and which is more, as a conqueror in the cause which now dependeth. There is a general truth in this. To call many a man the “last upon the earth,” is as much as to say, he is a poor or a miserable man. The “last upon the earth,” is the lowest or meanest upon the earth. Thus Job describeth at once the poverty and weakness of his condition, and the strength of his faith. I know that my redeemer liveth, and though I be last upon the earth, yet I shall stand in the cause, and carry it against my friends, because I have such a Redeemer, such a Deliverer, to under-take for me.

And to make that yet clearer, some expound those words “**upon the earth,**” or (As the Apostle speaks) “the off scouring of all things” in the account of all men. We have such an expression in our language, concerning a person who hath low thoughts of himself or is vile in his own eyes. “He is not worth or he doth not judge himself worth the ground he goes upon”: that is, he judges himself as Job is supposed to do, according to this interpretation, more vile than the earth. And then the sense of the whole may be thus conceived; As if he had said; “Though I am in my own opinion, or in the opinion of others, more vile than the earth, as the off-scouring of all things, the scourge, of men, and the outcast of the people, yet I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall stand right before Him in judgment when my cause comes to trial. In which sense this word “stand” is used (Psa. 1:5). The wicked shall not “**stand in the judgment,**” that is, they shall not be justified or acquitted, they shall fall before the Judge. Wicked men though they judge themselves

more excellent than the heavens, shall yet fall in judgment when the righteous shall stand, who thought themselves, or were thought more base than the earth. But I shall not stay upon this interpretation, there being so much straining of the text to make it out.

Secondly, It is referred to the person of the Redeemer, “I believe that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand the last upon the earth.” The last, is one of the titles of Christ; Who is called Alpha and Omega, the first and the last (Rev. 1:8). It is as great an honor to be called the last, as the first. (Isa. 44:6) “**Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am** (acaron, the word of the text) **the last; and beside me there is no God**” first and last, Alpha and Omega comprehend and carry all. Alpha is the first, Omega is the last letter of the Greek alphabet; these are letters of more eminent note than the rest, because being first and last, they enclose all the rest. How eminent then is Christ, Who is Himself both these letters! How great is He in whom the terms of greatest distance imaginable, first and last, meet, and are united; so that Christ calling Himself first and last, takes to Himself absolute perfection, power, sovereignty, eternity, and Divinity, He is the first, because before all beginning, He was in the beginning with God, and from Him all things received their beginning. He is the last, because He shall continue for ever without end, and is the end of all things that had a beginning; “All things were created (not only) by Him, but for Him” (Col. 1:16). He is also the last, because when we have attained Him, we are at the highest or last of our attainments; we rest and have no more to seek when we have found Him, for He brings us to the Father in Whom, through

Himself the Son, we have eternal rest. Thus we may conceive Job’s faith triumphing in his Redeemer, as the sum and comprehension of all things, “He liveth as the first, and the last shall stand.”

Upon the Earth, or upon the dust.

Which is expounded three ways (as I shall show further.)

First, Of His standing upon the earth, when He was made man.

Secondly, Of His rising up upon the earth (for a word as was touched before, signifies both to rise up and to stand upon) after He had laid down His life, and abode in the grave three days.

Thirdly, Of His standing upon the earth, or over the earth (the Hebrew bears that also) when He shall judge man.

Again, Some render, “He shall stand against the dust; that is, He shall contend with the dust, and shall by His power raise me and all men up out of the dust; He shall conquer the dust; to the word (with this preposition) is used. “Cain rose, or stood up against his brother Abel: Cain’s rising against him, was a contending with him to slay him (Gen. 4:8). “Ye are risen up against the house of my father” (Judg. 9:12). “Mine enemies rise up against me, or upon me” (Psa. 54:5). Thus the Redeemer shall rise, or stand up against the earth. What earth?

This earth is interpreted in two ways; first, for men, who are but dust and refined earth; or for that earth into which the bodies of men are resolved in the grave. Christ shall stand up against that earth, to recover the bodies of His people out of it; so a late expositor gives the sense. This verse (saith he) declares out of the hand of corruption. He will stand upon the earth as upon a conquered enemy. Our bodies are sown in the earth, there they are held prisoners; But

Christ will recover them out of the earth, He will strive with the dust, and putting forth His Almighty power, break the bars and gates of that prison wherein the bodies of His people are detained. Death is an enemy, the last enemy, as the Apostle speaks, (I Cor. 15:25-26) where he represents Christ, contending with it, and conquering it. “**For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet**”; The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Now death keeps all under its feet, but Christ shall put death under His feet, standing triumphantly upon the dust in the latter day.

For the further understanding of these words, I shall gather the distinct interpretations and versions of them together, that they may lay the fairer to the reader’s eye and judgment.

“**He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.**”

First, The Vulgate translation renders this clause, as the former, in the first person, as Job’s profession of his faith about his own resurrection. “**I know that my redeemer liveth**” and that I shall rise in the latter day. The favors of that translation strive much to vindicate and maintain it, so also to reconcile it to the Original, which is in the third person (as all agree) besides other wide differences, very hardly, if at all, to be agreed. Nor is there any need to expound Job speaking in this verse of his personal resurrection, (unless inclusively with the resurrection of all mankind) that being the business of the two verses following. For as soon as he had said, “**He** (that is Christ the Redeemer) **shall stand at the latter day upon the earth,**” he subjoins his assurance in the next words, that himself should be raised up; “**Though after my skin**

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Job 19:25

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worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." How strong and confident an assertion of his own resurrection is couched and contained in that profession, will appear when I come to the opening of it.

Secondly, This clause is understood by some metaphorically; "To stand, is to overcome and be victorious; **"He shall stand upon the earth"**; that is, Christ shall conquer all His enemies, all that oppose Him shall fall before Him; His enemies shall lick the dust, but He shall stand upon the dust, or continue last upon the earth. This holds out a comfortable truth,

That

"Christ will certainly out-stand and vanquish all His enemies."

Perpetual duration triumphs over all. Whatsoever Christ hath done, or doeth, or is to do, is wrapped up in this, "That he was, and is, and is to come," or in this, that He is **"Alpha and Omega"** First and last. It is a grand principle among politicians; "Take time and ye may do any thing," He that is first and last, may take what time He will, and therefore He may and will do whatsoever He wills. The Eternal will have the last word, and the last blow. He that stands last upon the ground, and keeps the field, carrieth the day against all, and is proclaimed Conqueror. What a mercy it is to have a friend who counts all our enemies His, and who is too hard for all His enemies.

Thirdly, These words (as others conceive) at least imply and intimate to us the Incarnation of Christ, or His taking flesh. "I believe that my Redeemer liveth," or that He is God from everlasting. There is Job's faith in the divine nature of the Redeemer, and that

"in the latter day he shall stand on the earth;" that is, that He shall take flesh and be incarnate, there is Job's faith, that the Redeemer should assume our human nature, and so become "God with us" - He could not have had a true faith in the Redeemer unless he had believed this; he could not have called Christ his Goel, or kinsman, in the former part of the verse, unless he had believed that he should stand upon the earth, as he expressed it in the latter. The Redeemer must be God, how else could He satisfy? The Redeemer must be man, how else could He suffer?

Fourthly, Others conceive these words speaking Job's faith in the resurrection of Christ from the earth, or standing up upon the earth. *Funius* (If I apprehend him rightly) translates fully to this sense. "And shall rise the last upon the dust." Not that Christ shall rise last, for He is "the first born from the dead," and the "first fruits of them that sleep," but He arose as the last Adam in opposition to Adam, who was the first man, as the Apostle speaks (I Cor. 15:45). Mr. Broughton agrees also to this meaning, rendering the words, "And at last shall rise upon the dust"; which he thus explains, "My Redeemer shall rise from death." See then how rich a store we have here of precious truths about the great mystery of Christ in this one Scripture, which the Holy Ghost hath been pleased so to phrase, that it may at once hold forth Job's faith in the incarnation of Christ, that He should stand upon the dust in our nature, as also in the resurrection of Christ, that He should rise out of the dust in our nature. These two involve each other; for unless Christ had taken flesh, and stood upon the dust, He could not die and so lay down in the dust; and His rising from the dust, necessarily implies, that

He had taken flesh, which He laid down by His free submission unto death.

Yet (as I conceive) these words are more strictly to be understood, not of Christ's taking flesh, and standing upon the earth in it, nor of the personal rising of His flesh out of the dust (both which are yet included) but of His coming to raise all flesh out of the dust, and then to proceed in judgment with them.

And thus a late expositor concludes. *These words* (faith he) *have various interpretations, all agreeing with the analogy of faith, yet this is a plain and pertinent sense which we follow, Namely, that Job believeth his Redeemer to be eternal, who shall at last stand upon the earth, and by his sovereign power or command raise the dead.* Our translation together with our renewed annotations appear fairest this way; and Mr. Mercer (though himself followeth the Rabbines in the opening of this text, yet) confesseth, that it is the Judgment of most interpreters, both ancient and modern, that these words are to be understood of the general resurrection, and of the Judgment which shall follow. For when Job professeth his assurance, that his Redeemer shall stand upon the earth in the latter day, we are not to stay our thoughts in a bare posture, but are led forth to consider, what His standing there intends, or what the Scripture tells us He shall do when He appears and stands upon the earth in the latter day. Now the work of that day is plainly reduced to these two heads in Scripture, "Resurrection and Judgment." In reference to both which, I shall specificate these general words, and draw them out into express and particular observations.



The Ruin of An

(Continued from page 1) ♦

debt. He is estranged in spirit, and his whole life is one of disloyalty and rebellion.

It is an astonishing sight to see men who clench the chains of their sins and shun freedom. How stupid it is for a man who is shortly to enter into an unchangeable, endless life, to live as if there was no God, no grave, and no hereafter. He goes merrily toward his own damnation and makes a jest of his own undoing. He sleeps in sin so near eternity; he laughs and dances over the brink of Hell.

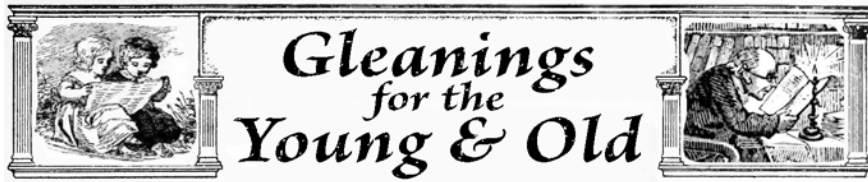
An all-seeing God takes notice of all such persons. **"Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass. . . Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb"** (Isa. 48:4, 8).

Proverbs 12:15 declares: **"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."** An obstinate sinner's will is the law of his life. This is what keeps a fool from being wise enough to give up his sins. Like the Israelites in the days of the judges, such people **"cease not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way"** (Jud. 2:19). Such a self-willed person is described in the Bible as **"stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears"** (Acts 7:51). He is guilty of hardening his neck (Neh. 9:16) or heart (II Chron. 36:13) and of going **"backward, and not forward"** (Jer. 7:24).

THE SOURCE OF THIS OBSTINACY

First, this obstinacy proceeds from unbelief: **"Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened**

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Gleanings for the Young & Old

KNOTS AND BOWS

"I tell you I won't have the child do it," said Joe White.

"And I say she shall," was the determined answer from his wife.

Joe dashed his hand down on the table with a force that smashed a little vase to pieces, and as it was an old favorite which Maggie had given him in their courting days, Joe felt more angry than ever. Maggie laughed a nasty little laugh, which cut like a knife into her husband's heart.

"You may jeer," he cried, "but I mean to have my own way; the child shall not go to Mrs. Brown's."

"Who's to prevent it, I'd like to know? I'm the child's mother, and have as much right to her as you have, and I say, if Mrs. Brown likes to offer her two shillings a week for helping in the workroom, there's no reason why the child shouldn't go after school-hours; she is on half-time now, and the sooner she begins to earn a little the better. So you've lost your temper and broken our best vase all for nothing."

"If you are not the most aggravating woman that a man was ever tied to," was the angry answer; "you make me savage, when I only want to do what's right."

Maggie tossed her head, and walked off to the little wash-house, muttering to herself about some people who tried to be pious, and yet threw the things about the moment they were put out. Joe followed her with his eyes, then dropped into his chair again and thought.

Now, although our readers may not imagine it, these two people

were a most worthy couple. They were both anxious to follow Christ; they were both very fond of each other; and yet scenes of this kind were constantly taking place. Neither of them seemed to understand that we should all try to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; and so they each in turns made the other suffer. Joe was quite right in determining that his only child, Annie, should not be allowed to associate with Mrs. Brown's work-girls, who were well known to be a fast and godless set; but he was quite wrong in asserting his rights in a way which roused his wife to resistance.

In the happiest married life there is always so much to give and take, and such "an earnest need for prayer," that when we are doing what we know to be God's will, we may do it in the kind instead of the unkind way. Joe thought of all this as he sat by the fire, and his heart softened. He gathered up the broken pieces of the vase, and as he did so, the words of the minister's Sunday text came into his mind, **"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost"** (John 6:12).

"Maggie!" he called, in a cheery voice, "come and help me gather up the fragments that remain."

"Serve you right, Joe," was the answer, as Maggie put her head round the corner, with one end of a cloth she was wringing, in her mouth. "I'm not sorry a bit; you can't mend it;" but the twinkle in her merry eyes showed she had recovered her temper.

"Perhaps not," said Joe; "but I can save the pieces to be a

warning to me in future. Maggie, my girl, we must stop these sort of scenes, or perhaps some day we shall find, too late, that we have lost our happiness in each other altogether. The minister said that sometimes we were too late to gather up the fragments that remain; don't let us ever have to find that, Maggie."

The wife had left the wash-house, and was standing looking into her husband's face with tearful eyes, and once more the quarrel was made up, and Joe went out to his afternoon work with a lighter heart, determined that, with God's help, he would try to be more forbearing and gentle. Maggie, meanwhile, felt equally penitent, for although Joe had said it in anger, she knew she had goaded him on. "I'll try and mend the vase for him," she said to herself; "and if I can't do that, I'll go to Elmwood and buy another as nearly like it as possible. I wish we didn't have these quarrels; but Joe is so nice afterwards that I'm not sure they don't clear the air, like the thunderstorms."

No, Maggie, a thousand times no. Love is like a delicate china vase—each rough word cracks it, each quarrel breaks it; and though you may join the pieces together again with tears of repentance, the vase can never give out the clear sound which it did when it was whole.

Joe was walking home towards tea-time, when he heard the

sounds of a horse's hoofs behind him, and recognizing the young squire who had only lately come into possession, he drew on one side to greet him as he passed in front.

Mr. Spencer knew Joe well by name as one of the most trustworthy laborers on the estate, and had already had two or three chats with him, so he reined up his horse, and said, "Going to be a fine evening, I think, Joe; we want a little sunshine badly just now. I've been riding round, and was surprised to see how backward the crops are. We want a little sunshine everywhere, don't we, Joe? for it has been rather stormy to-day."

Joe looked up, puzzled. There was something in the Squire's tone which made him think there was a hidden meaning in what he said.

"I didn't hear any storm, sir," he answered.

"Not out of doors, perhaps," said Mr. Spencer, with a smile; then, dropping his voice, he went

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"THE WORLD IS MADE UP OF TWO SORTS OF PEOPLE."

Gleanings-Young & Old

(Continued from page 20) ♦

on, rapidly, as if half afraid of his own words, "You won't mind my speaking to you, Joe, because you know my father was so fond of you and your wife. He told me often that you were just the nicest couple in the village, but that you both would try for the last word, and so you did not do half the good you might by your example. As I passed your cottage at dinner-time, I couldn't help hearing your voices in angry dispute."

Joe hung his head, and grasped his stick with nervous fingers, as Mr. Spencer continued, "I'm not sure I ought to speak to you about it, so don't please be angry with me; but I should not let you risk your body without warning you, and I don't think I ought to let you risk your soul. You know, I have seen a great deal more of life than you have, Joe, although I am younger, and I have found out that all the world is made up of two sorts of people--those who are always tying knots, and those who are always careful to tie bows."

Joe looked up brightly as the Squire continued, "Now, my wife and I have come to the conclusion that there never should be more than two knots tied in a man's life. One should fasten him securely to God, the other to his wife; all the rest should be bows which can be easily undone."

"I'm not quite sure I understand about the bows, sir," said Joe.

"Every quarrel is a great big knot, my friend, which is hard to undo; whereas, if we could only just be gentle and patient with each other, we should find all the difficulties in life would be bows instead of knots."

"There are many difficulties," said Joe, with a sigh.

"And much grace given to overcome them. Do you see this horse's tail? Well, wise men tell me that if all those hairs were left their natural length, and woven together, they would make a rope strong enough to bear the weight of the horse itself; so I think every little temptation overcome, and every little good deed done, though small enough in itself, helps to make a cord to bind us tightly to God, Who is our only hope. Good evening, Joe; think over the difference between knots and bows."

"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15:1).

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). (*The Family Friend*, 1885).

GOD IS NEAR

In a lone room at the top of one of the houses where every room was the dwelling of a family, there dwelt an aged woman, whose scanty pittance a week was scarcely enough for her bare livelihood. The visitor observed with some surprise a strawberry plant growing and flourishing in a broken teapot that stood on the window-sill. He remarked from time to time how it grew, and with what care it was tended and watched.

At length, one day, he said to this poor woman, "Your plant does well; you will soon have some strawberries on it."

"It is not for the sake of the fruit I grow it," replied the woman.

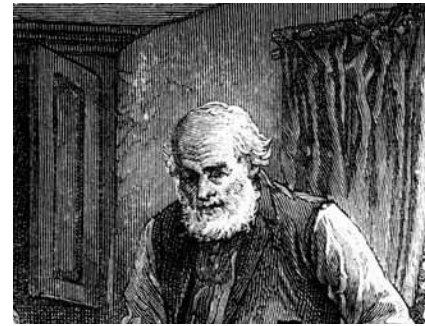
"Then why do you take so much care of it?" he asked.

"Well, sir," she replied, "I am very poor--too poor to keep any living creature, but it is a great comfort to me to have that living plant, for I know that it can live only by the power of God; and as I see it live and grow from day to

day, it tells me that God is near."

HUCKSTER JACK

This Huckster Jack was a poor, wicked fellow, who had gone about from village to village, swearing,



drinking, huckstering, and perhaps pilfering. Some thought him half-witted, but the story would show his mind to be sound enough. He heard a poor woman sing somewhere—"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all; But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

He remembered the words, and what was better, he felt their sense; and he kept on humming them to himself till God's good Spirit engraved them on his heart. There they were recorded, and Jack was a new man and a saved man. So he essayed to join himself unto the church, but the brethren looked suspiciously at him and enquired, "What is your experience?" He said he had no experience but this—"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all; But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

The good elders very properly asked, "Are you converted? Have you been born again?" and Jack replied, "I do not know much about these things; but this I do know and am sure of—I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all; But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

They put him back for awhile, to try if he would grow in his knowledge, but he never went an inch beyond the first standard. He knew what he did know, and to that he held fast—"I'm a poor

sinner, and nothing at all; But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

Well, they must take him into the church; they could not well refuse a man with such a confession of faith; and when he was in the church, walking with the brethren, he was happier than the rest of them, at which they greatly marveled, and one said to him, "Brother Jack, don't you sometimes feel doubts and fears?"

"Doubts," he said, "what do you mean? I never doubt that I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all; for I have daily proofs of it, and why should I doubt that Jesus Christ is my all in all? for He says He is, and I must believe Him."

"Ah, well," said one, "sometimes I enjoy good frames and feelings, and feel very happy, and then I lose them, and sink in spirit."

Jack answered, "I never get lower than I am, for I am down at the bottom—A poor sinner, and nothing at all. I cannot get lower than that, can I? But I am also at the top, for Jesus Christ is my all in all, and I cannot get higher than that, can I?"

They tried him many ways with their blessed experience, of which you and I have got cartloads, perhaps wagonloads; but he could not be drawn out of his one firm position. They tried him with their various attainments, depressions, anxieties, quibbles, and questions; but still the huckster would not budge. He had bought the truth and would not sell it, and so he stuck to—"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all; But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

"The conies are a feeble folk, yet have they their houses in the rocks" (Prov. 30:26): they are safe, but they keep to their hiding place.

Of course our new "perfection" brethren, spic and span saints as they are, are not like Jack, they

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Gleanings-Young & Old

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are not “poor sinners, and nothing at all,” and I am afraid lest some of them should find out that Jesus Christ is not their all in all. But if you and I are as he was, “poor sinners, and nothing at all,” we may, with firm and resolute grip, lay hold upon the other line, “But Jesus Christ is my all in all.” Christ’s fullness is meant for our emptiness; Christ’s righteousness is meant for our sin, salvation is for the lost. When you and I are no longer sinners, Christ is no longer our Saviour; when you and I no more need Him, then we shall not have Him. Our need is our warrant, and if that be gone, all is gone. Jesus did not bleed and die to be a superfluity to us: He came to meet a grim necessity. As long as we are nothing, Christ is our all in all; we may be sure of that, and that is just the gospel in a nutshell. I preach that same gospel, in the hope that in after days this word may be scattered far and wide, and some Jack the Huckster, or some other like him, may find himself to be utterly empty and undone, and may then know that Christ is ordained to be his salvation. Jesus came into the world to save real sinners, not sham sinners; for He is a real, and not a pretended Saviour. He saves those who are always confessors of sin, always needy in themselves, and therefore always glad of Him. Even in their best estate the saved ones need their Lord: even if we walk in the light as God is in the light, and have fellowship with Him, we still sin, and still **“the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”** (I John 1:7). (From Spurgeon’s sermon *A Monument for the Dead, and A Voice to the Living*).

The Ruin of An

(Continued from page 19) ♦

their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God” (II Kings 17:14). When men do not receive the truth of God’s Word and doubt His promises, they will persist in their disobedience. Rebels against God have no faith in God or His Word.

Second, this stubbornness arises from pride: **“But they and their fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments”** (Neh. 9:16, 29). Pride is at the bottom of men’s obstinacy and disobedience. They are too proud to bow their necks to God’s moral and spiritual yoke.

Third, obstinacy comes from an evil heart: **“But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward”** (Jer. 7:24). How foolish for a man to make his own wicked and deceitful heart his guide (Jer. 17:9). Well did King Solomon say: **“He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool”** (Prov. 28:26).

FEW MEN GO TO HELL UNWARNED

According to my text, stubborn sinners are **“often reprov’d.”** These reproofs may take many forms. These warnings are addressed to man’s reason, his conscience, and his affections. These warnings in various forms leave the sinner without excuse, and they allow him to fit himself for destruction.

First, the faithful preaching of the Word is a rebuke to the thoughtless and sinful: **“And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his**

brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts” (Zech. 7:8-12).

Rebuking sin is especially the work of a minister of the gospel. The Apostle Paul wrote to ministers: **“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine”** (II Tim. 4:2). Paul told Timothy, a young preacher, to rebuke the immoral: **“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear”** (I Tim. 5:20). Modern-day preachers are content to sit back and draw their salaries while their congregations go to Hell without one word of reproof. These peace-at-any-price, good-Lord-and-good-Devil preachers never engage in plain, positive, dogmatic rebuke of the erring. They fear the moving van and the faces of men more than they do God. Their end shall be according to their works.

Second, God-fearing men and women may be used of the Lord to reprimand others: **“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him”** (Lev. 19:17). Our Lord said: **“Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him: and if he repent, forgive him”** (Luke 17:3). We must not only avoid sin, but we must endeavor to reform other sinners. Friendly rebuke is a duty we owe

to each other, and we ought to give it and receive it in love. If we do not reprove the unfruitful workers of darkness, we have fellowship with them (Eph. 5:11).

Third, some children carelessly ignore the rebuke of their parents: **“If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them”** (Deut. 21:18). Today parents often warn their children of the evil of drugs, premarital sex, alcohol abuse, laziness, atheism, and unbelief in the gospel, but these warnings largely go unheeded.

Fourth, conscience is sometimes a means of reproof to the wayward man or woman. Conscience is designed by God to accuse us of wrong (Rom. 2:15). Though defiled by sin (Tit. 1:15), it still testifies of right and wrong and of the existence of God who rewards right and punishes wrong. In John 8 some men accused a woman of adultery. Christ told these accusers: **“He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. . . . And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst”** (John 8:7, 9). Prolonged and unheeded rebuke may cause conscience to be **“...seared with a hot iron”** (I Tim. 4:2).

Fifth, God chides men by providential chastisement. In the Book of Amos, chapter 4, Jehovah sent a lack of necessities (v. 5), envious surroundings (vv. 7-8), reversal of prosperity (v. 9), severe judgments (v. 10), and unusual events (v. 11) on Israel to reclaim them. Despite all these providential warnings, Jehovah complained: **“Yet have ye not returned unto me”** (Amos 4:8).

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The Ruin of An

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9, 10, 11). For their failure to heed these chastening rebukes, Jehovah told them: **"...prepare to meet thy God, O Israel"** (Amos 4:12).

By many messengers and in many voices, God calls sinners to repentance and reconciliation. **"As I live; saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"** (Ezek. 33:11). The general call of the gospel says: **"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD; and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon"** (Isa. 55:6-7).

REPROOF SHOULD BE RECEIVED

Among mankind rebuke comes from people who love you and desire your good. It should be received with all humility of mind: **"Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head. . ."** (Ps. 141:5). Righteous men and women are best qualified to reprove the unrighteousness of others. Fools resent constructive criticism: **"They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh unrightly"** (Amos 5:10). Our Savior said: **"The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil"** (John 7:7). A wise man profits from a kind rebuke: **"He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue"** (Prov. 28:23).

The man or woman, the boy or girl,

who fails to hear the many rebukes from God and man are guilty of many crimes. First, they disclose they have no more intelligence than brute beasts: **"Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish"** (Prov. 12:1). Many cows and sheep live off of the fat of the land not knowing they are being fattened for the slaughter house. Sorry to say, but some men and women have no more sense than cows and sheep.

Second, he despises his own soul: **"He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul..."** (Prov. 15:32). Men today are so concerned with their bodies, but they care little for their souls. How foolish! Their soul is worth more than their body; yea, even the whole world (Matt. 16:26).

Third, an obstinate despising of reproof is fatal: **"Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die"** (Prov. 15:10). The man who shuns reproof loves death and seeks banishment from God.

Fourth, such conduct gives evidence of reprobation: **"But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels"** (Ps. 81:11-12). **"Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith"** (II Tim. 3:8). Those who receive **"...not the love of the truth, that they might be saved"** shall all be **"damned"** (II Thess. 2:10, 12).

THE ABUSE OF REPROOF

"He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck. . ." The metaphor is taken from oxen, which kick and jump, and will not permit the yoke to be put upon them (Deut. 10:16; Jer. 2:20; 27:8). Jeremiah wrote: **"I have surely heard**

Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. . ." (Jer. 31:18).

The hardening of the neck reveals human responsibility. God holds men responsible for rejecting the truth. Jesus Christ said: **"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"** (Mark 16:16).

This action implies determination. A person who is never reprov'd might plead ignorance or forgetfulness. This excuse cannot be used by a man who has been **"often reprov'd."** His disregarded warnings will rise up in the judgment to condemn him.

The hardening of the neck implies a hardness of heart. It is possible for a sinner to harden his heart. Hence the warning in Hebrews 3:7-8: **"Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness." Pharaoh "...hardened his heart..."** (Ex. 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7) and refused to liberate the Hebrew slaves in the days of Moses. The Israelites hardened their hearts in the wilderness and could not enter the promised land. Until a man's heart is renewed by the grace of God, the impressions by human warning wear off. It is the depraved heart that makes the neck hard. A stiff-necked person is a stony-hearted person.

Woe to the man or woman who is stubborn and obstinate after many reproofs. Such a person despises the merciful appointments of providence for his recovery and disdains the warnings of his fellow-creatures. Such a one turns God's blessings into curses and converts the very means intended to soften his nature into deadly poison. This godless person is content to satisfy

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BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

5-1-2020 to 5-31-2020

Beginning Balance	\$2,765.52
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	200.00
Carol Willett, Cottonwood Shores, TX	75.00
Citrus M. B. C. Inverness, FL	25.00
Donald Parker, Millport, AL	100.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Grace B. C., Annville, KY	200.00
Grace B. C., Gladwin, MI	50.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC	50.00
Grace Missionary B. C. Tulsa, OK	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Jim Bradshaw, Fairfield, OH	76.00
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
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wellington, KS	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	60.00
Anonymous	720.00
Dividing checks	0.00
Sub Total	\$2,793.50
TOTAL	\$5,559.02

EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	490.00
Postage	571.72
Supplies	0
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Dividing checks	0.00
Bank charge	13.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,550.68
ENDING BALANCE	\$2,008.34



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

5-1-2020 to 5-31-2020

Beginning Balance	\$2,853.17
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Calvary I. B. C., Sumas, WA	200.00
Grace B. C., Annville, KY	200.00
.....	625.00
TOTAL	3,478.17
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	363.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	363.98
.....	3,114.19
Interest	+0.02
ENDING BALANCE	\$3,114.21

The Ruin of An

(Continued from page 23) ♦

his bodily appetites, to eat and drink, and die, and leave undeveloped his capacities for the higher things of life. **“But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction”** (Jer. 17:23).

Sin repeated is habit forming. Jesus said: **“...Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin”** (John 8:34). Though often reprov'd for his sins, such a person tends to harden his heart more and more. The ear grows deaf to the often-neglected alarm. **“Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help”** (Ps. 107:11-12).

Each day that a wicked man lives on this earth is a time of preservation, privilege, and possibilities. God invites sinners to repentance and faith through gospel preachers and the voice of witnessing disciples (Mark 1:15). Sad to say, but many abuse the gift of life by using it for their own personal enjoyment; they slight opportunities; they despise the means of grace. Though often warned that such conduct will lead to Hell, many have their conscience paralyzed, their eyes blinded, and their necks hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. **“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil”** (Eccl. 8:11).

HIS SUDDEN RUIN

“He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall sudden be destroyed, and that without remedy...” Divine patience has an end. Vessels of wrath are **“endured with much long-suffering”** show themselves **“fitted to destruction”**

(Rom. 9:22). They shall suddenly be destroyed as a potter's vessel is broken to pieces with an iron rod (Ps. 2:9). **“...Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again; and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury”** (Jer. 19:11). The days of probation of an obstinate sinner shall end with startling suddenness. The soul shall be required in one night (Luke 12:20). **“But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses”** (Ps. 68:21).

Death comes to them without warning: **“In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand”** (Job 34:20). They shall pass from guilt to judgment: **“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”** (Heb. 9:27). Their destruction is without remedy. As they lived, so they die. They go to stand before God unwashed from their sins (Prov. 30:11-14) and with no advocate to plead their cause. As they sink down in the flames of Hell, every tongue of fire will seem to whisper, **“Without remedy!”** The reproofs they once heard will be like hot thunderbolts to their wretched souls, and the remembrance of them will feed the worm that never dies. **“Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the LORD hath rejected them”** (Jer. 6:30).

CONCLUSION

1. Every person saved by the grace of God should get down on his knees every day and thank the Lord for saving his soul. If it were not for the blood of the everlasting covenant and the grace of God, we all would die obstinate sinners and suffer eternal torment. Oh, to grace! how great a debtor we are daily

constrained to be!

2. Reproof of all kinds are intended to guard the foolish soul against impending danger and destruction. But when these rebukes go unheeded, there can be no escape for the stubborn reprobate. **“...Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts”** (Isa. 22:14). There is doubt guilt. The rejection of the reproof is an additional sin--an insult to a righteous God. **“Or despiseth thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds”** (Rom. 2:4-6).

3. Presently, sinner, your judgment and damnation lingers. You are not yet in the fires of Hell. You are yet standing upon the goodness and forbearance of God. Do not let death find you unprepared to face a righteous God. As long as there is life, there is hope. **“Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee”** (Job 36:18). When the final blow is struck

all will be over. Then the voices of warnings will be lost in the thunders of justice, and the star of hope buried in the midnight of despair.

4. Let it never be said of you as it was of Israel of old: **“But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy”** (II Chron. 36:16). How fearful to hear God say to you some day: **“Because I called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh: When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD; They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices”** (Prov. 1:24-31).



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