

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

Witness of the Lord Jesus Christ

By Benjamin Stepp
of Given, West Virginia



"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:7-8).

One may ask, how are we to be witnesses for our Lord Jesus Christ? And it's certainly a valid question. Christ says, "ye shall be witnesses unto me..." it is the responsibility of all Christians to be witnesses for Christ. In our present day situation that means many different things to different people.

Let's take some simple definitions to work with. Witness: (1) A person who has seen or known something, and is therefore competent to give evidence concerning it; a spectator. (2) That which serves as or furnishes evidence or proof.

To me it means that we faithfully and accurately declare the message that Christ has given us in His Word. Not the least

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It Ain't Hereditary

By Raymond Bennett
of Ithaca, New York



"And think 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... Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (Matt. 3:9; John 1:13).

Isn't it interesting how many erroneous concepts we, as supposedly an intelligent, enlightened society, cling to and believe, even in the face of obvious contradictory evidence? We usually believe these things because we were taught them as children and, as children, we were taught to believe what our elders told us.

Teaching children to believe and obey their elders is a good thing and an important part of teaching them to become good citizens, to respect proper authority, and generally just to learn. But even more important is what and how we teach the children. A good example comes up every year at Christmas time. If we have taught our children about 'Santa Claus', what happens

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The Teaching Ministry of the Holy Spirit

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14)

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25).

A few days ago I heard a minister say, "We don't need the Holy Spirit's help in understanding the Bible. The Bible is the Holy Spirit." But the Bible says in Ephesians 6:17 that the Word of God is "the sword of the Spirit." This proves that the Spirit and the Bible are not one and the same. Such a statement as this preacher made reveals his ignorance of the work of the Holy Spirit. I observed from the perversion of the Scriptures which followed in his sermon that the Spirit had not guided him in his Bible study at all.

A few years ago an old Baptist preacher said, "I waited forty years for the leadership of the Holy Spirit and discovered that it was not even promised to us." Such a senseless and unscriptural statement should never fall from the lips of any preacher. This man, too, was completely ignorant of the teaching ministry of the Spirit.

In conversation with various preachers over the years I have made reference to the leadership of the Holy Spirit only to see them have a silly grin on their faces. It seems to me that there is no phase of the Spirit's work so misunderstood as His teaching ministry. The average church has rejected the Holy Spirit, just as the world has rejected Christ. The result of this is thousands of churches are without spiritual power. Their members are religious, but lost.

Man not only needs a Divine Savior, but a Divine Teacher. The Holy Spirit has come to teach us, just as really as the Lord Jesus Christ came to save us. We

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The Wall that Encloses the Bride

By E. G. Cook
(1898 - 1986)



As is the case of all other great Bible doctrines, there is much speculation, and a lot of false teaching concerning our Lord's bride. I want to say to begin with that I do not know all about this great subject. But for a few moments may we study this wonderful subject together.

In II Corinthians 11:2 Paul says: "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." This word "chaste" comes from the Greek word hagnos which means "pure from every fault." So Paul is to present a bride who is pure from every fault to Christ in the coming day. But in what sense, or in regard to what is she to be pure from every

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The Road Map to Glory

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia



Very often, as we travel to some particular place, we make use of a map. In fact, throughout the history of the travels of men, maps have been used in order to help men get from place to place.

Recently, in the tumultuous political landscape of the Middle East, a popular catch-phrase (or policy) has been the "Road Map to Peace." Well, today, I want us to think about the *Road Map to Glory*. And, what I mean by this is that I want us to examine the road map that we have from here to Heaven.

The Directions Given

What I want us to think about first are the directions that we have been given. The children and servants of God are not left on this earth without some guidance. In fact, God has given

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There is no use in hearing the Gospel and admiring the sermon, unless we put it in practice.

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Editor: Christopher Cockrell
Staff: Sheron Cockrell, Marsha Kiser, Virginia
Cockrell

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

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Road Map to Glory

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to His people some very good directions (or instructions) that will guide us unto Glory.

It is a well-known fact that men, in general, when they have a problem finding some particular place, do not like to stop and ask for directions. Well, the same is true in the spiritual realm. Men (and women) in the flesh do not like to ask for directions or guidance. Lost mankind thinks he has the answer for everything. And, he thinks that he is perfectly capable of saving himself, or perfectly capable of finding his own way to Glory.

However, you and I know that man, left to his own devices, will never find his way to Heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ said in John 5:40, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Why will not man come to the Son? Well, because he has no desire to come, and because he has no ability to come. A little later in the gospel of John, the Lord Jesus tells the pharisees and the chief priests, "...Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come" (John 7:33-34). Not unlike a man that is lost on a roadway, without a map, and without any hope of finding his way to his destination; the unsaved man is also lost and hopeless and he *cannot come* to Glory, the place where the Lord Jesus is.

So, what hope does man have? Well, we find that the Lord, in the *Road Map to Glory*, has left us some directions. Of course, you and I know that the directions I am talking about are found today in the Word of God as it is recorded in the Holy Bible. As we think about the directions the Lord has left us, I want us to notice three words that describe these directions – clear, precise, and unfailing.

When we receive directions to some physical destination, we often times will look at those directions and we will become confused. It is very true that the directions one man might give to another man might sometimes be confusing. However, in the directions that the Lord has given to us, which guide us to Glory, there is no confusion. In fact, the directions the Lord has given to us are very clear. In the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we read the message of the Lord that He delivered: "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). As a clarion call, the directions go out that guide us to Glory, "...Repent...!"

And, as we go on to notice more about these directions the Lord has provided for us, we notice that these directions are also very precise. Sometimes, when we receive directions from some man that

might be meant to guide us to some place or location, we find there might be a lot of unnecessary information that might be included in those directions. However, the directions to Glory that the Lord Jesus Christ has delivered unto us are not only clear, but they are also precise. In other words, the directions that He has given to us in His Holy Word are exact and they can accommodate our every need in a very precise manner. The famous words of the Lord that were delivered to Israel through Micah the prophet are recorded for us in Micah 6:8. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" You see, the Lord has delivered to us directions that are clear, and they are precise. There is no ambiguity in them, and there is no superfluous material in them. Paul told Timothy, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:15-17). The first key phrase I want us to notice from this passage is, "...the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation..." The directions (holy Scriptures) which the Lord has given to us, coupled with "faith," are able to bring us "unto salvation." Nothing more is needed! The directions of Jesus Christ are, indeed, very precise and effective! Another key phrase in these verses is, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable..." Often we notice the things that the "scripture" is "profitable" for – such as "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." However, today I want us to simply notice that the Holy Word of God is "profitable." These directions He has given to us are good and profitable directions. They are clear, precise, and profitable. They will not get us lost, but in fact, these directions will find us and save us!

Sometimes when someone gives us directions in this life we try to follow those directions very diligently, only to find out in the end, that the directions which were given to us were simply flawed. But, the directions that are included in the *Road Map to Glory* are truly unfailing directions. Some man, though his desires are genuine and well-intentioned, might get us lost, or send us in the wrong direction. The Lord Jesus Christ, though, will never lead us astray. When the children of Israel were essentially lost in the wilderness of Sinai, the Lord came unto them and led them in the way that they should go. We read in Exodus 13:21-22, "And the LORD

went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people." In a very similar way, we too, have the direction of the Lord to guide us in "the way." In a verse that fits very well with my subject today, we read, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Ps. 73:24). It is the "counsel" of the Lord God that will "guide" us on the *Road Map to Glory*. His unfailing nature, and His unfailing love, and His unfailing faithfulness, are all represented in His unfailing directions unto Glory.

The Faith to Follow

Now, once we are embarked upon this *Road Map to Glory* we behold the directions, and we begin to follow. However, it is incumbent upon us that once we have begun, we must continue to follow.

Let us return to the analogy of a physical road map with physical directions to some location or place. When we are given directions to some place we have never been, then we must, if we are to follow those directions, continue in the way we are instructed to go, even if the way might seem to us to be contrary to our own sense of direction. In fact, a set of directions and a map will do us no good whatsoever, if we do not follow them. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). If we trust that the map and the directions are legitimate, and that the destination or place the map will lead us to is a real place and a place to be desired; then we must, in faith, follow that map and the directions that accompany it. Later on in Luke 9, the Lord tells one that doesn't seem so eager to follow Him, "...No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). A man that doesn't have the faith to follow the *Road Map to Glory* is not fit for that Place! This is essentially what the Lord is saying to these folks.

Surely faith is a requirement if we would follow the directions Jesus Christ has for us. The word "faith" only appears two times in the King James Old Testament. But it appears 245 times in the New Testament. In one of the simplest and most direct instructions the Lord ever gave to His disciples, He said, "...Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22). Faith is indispensable as we travel the *Road Map to Glory*. Without faith we cannot read or understand the directions; without faith we cannot fully trust in our guide; and without faith we cannot believe in the destination. The Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples, as He sent them

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forth to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick, “..Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece” (Luke 9:3). You see, this journey they were to take, was a journey of faith. And the directions they followed must be followed with faith.

Any time we are given a set of directions to guide us to a particular place, it must be that we take and receive those directions because we have a need for them. In other words, we do not need directions to drive from our homes to our school, place of work, or the church building. However, when we are going some place we have not yet been, then we must have directions. Now, as we follow those directions, if we do not faithfully follow them, then it becomes possible that we will not ever find the destination. So, we must follow those directions. And, though we cannot see what lies around the next corner, or over the next mountain, still, we trust that the directions will take us to where it is that we want to be.

Going Through Troublesome Places

Sometimes when we follow a map or set of directions in this life, we end up going through some rather unsavory or dangerous or troublesome places. However, very often it is necessary to traverse these places in order that we might reach our destination.

The same is true in the *Road Map to Glory*. Though we do not understand why it is that our road must take us through these troublesome places, still, we know that we must go this way that is laid out for us. Paul had this to say about the way he traveled: “**We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh**” (II Cor. 4:8-11).

Sometimes it seems the way that we travel is full of misery and pain and sorrow. Yet, we must realize, these are only places that we are passing through on our way to Glory! The road map that we follow takes us many places we could not have foretold, and many places we might, perhaps, not have ourselves chosen to go. But, the destination is there before us. Therefore, we must be strong; and we must persevere and endure. For we know where it is that this map will take us in the end! And, we know while we travel this way that the map will take us, though the trials may be hard, yet the

Lord will care for us. Remember how the Lord took care of Elijah when he fled from Jezebel into the wilderness: “**But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God**” (I Kings 19:4-8). And, in the New Testament the Apostle Paul told the Corinthian Church, “**There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it**” (I Cor. 10:13). No matter where the map to glory might take us before we get to our destination, we must be sure that the Lord will provide for us. And, if we must necessarily pass through troublesome places and times of trial, then let us travel onward, knowing that others have gone this way before; and knowing that the Lord God has not once, in thousands of years, and in millions of lives – not once has He ever failed to bring His followers home! We cannot be forever lost on this way which we travel, if only we follow the *Road Map to Glory*!

The End in Sight

There have been times when I am following some directions in this life, that some landmark or building or home has been used to point my way to my destination. In fact, most of the times when someone in this life will give physical directions to some one else, they will make use of some landmark or feature that will identify the end of the journey – the place where the destination is.

Well, I think we can make use of this analogy in our spiritual road map as well. God has not left us without hope. In fact, we have faith to be our eyes, and hope to be our patience. We read in Hebrews 11:1, “**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**” Though the journey is not done yet; and though the destination is not ours yet, still, through the promises of God, and the faith He gives us to believe, we can be sure the end is near and the destination is ours. In the next chapter of Hebrews, we read these words: “**Wherefore seeing**

we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...” (Heb. 12:1-2). The journey we are making has a certain and a sure destination. We know it is ours, because of the faith which has been given to us.

And, even as we travel, there are signs and landmarks which that appear, satisfying us that the journey is a real one, and the author of the directions is a faithful author. Just before the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, His disciples came unto Him, and they asked Him, “**..Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?**” (Matt. 24:3). Well, later in His discourse, the Lord Jesus told His disciples, “**Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away**” (Matt. 24:32-35).

The Lord Jesus told His disciples these things and these signs concerning the coming of the Lord. However, I believe there are also signs and landmarks which accompany the way that we travel, as we follow the *Road Map to Glory*. For instance, there are the numerous promises God has made to us, that He is constantly keeping. These kept promises should remind us that we are following His directions on the way to glory. Also, we can notice the prophecies that were made, are, many of them, being fulfilled all around us. And we can see the Lord is preparing this world for His return, and for the judgment that awaits wicked men.

And, I think we can also tell that we are following the Lord and that the end is in sight by the fact that the more we seek to serve the Lord, and to pattern our lives after His, the more the world will hate us and persecute us. Paul told Timothy, “**Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived**” (II Tim. 3:12-13). All around us are “**godly**” men and women suffering “**persecution.**” And, all around us are “**evil men and seducers**” – and they are waxing “**worse and worse.**” To me, these are signs of the end. These are landmarks that mark out the end of our journey.

The Glory of God

Now at the end of this message, I want us all to recollect some time that we have followed someone’s directions, and even though we thought perhaps we might

never get there, in the end, we made it to our destination. Sometimes when we succeed in reaching our destination, we are filled with a sense of relief, and perhaps even a sense of accomplishment. The place which we have found, though it might be nothing more than the house of a friend, or some beautiful sight of nature, takes on a much greater meaning because we have wandered far and long to reach this destination. Consider when you and I might go on vacation to some distant land, when we get there, we feel gratified that we have made it, and we consider that place to be a wonderful place, or else why did we travel so far to reach it? To us, the ones that have traveled so far, this is the destination we have traveled to reach.

The point I am trying to make is that when we reach the end (the destination) of the spiritual *Road Map to Glory*, we have reached a glorious place. This is the place which we have desired to be; this is the place of our prayers; this is the place where our hopes have been kept. And, most importantly, this is the place of the glory of God.

When I say that we are following a *Road Map to Glory*, I do not mean that the destination is a place that glorifies us. (Though it is true that we shall be glorified in Him, see Rom. 8:17, 30). But, what I mean is the glory that we travel to is a glory that is the glory of God. What more wonderful place could we have as our destination? Jude said unto his readers, “**Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen**” (Jude 24-25).

Our Goal is to be in the “**presence of his glory.**” And when we reach that glory it will be acknowledged by all that it is the Lord God Who does “**present**” us “**faultless**” in that presence of glory. We must realize that it is the road map which we follow that will take us there. Our destination is described in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ: “**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**” (Rev. 21:23). In truth, our destination is more than a place – it is also a person and an existence. Our destination is God and the glory that is His.

Conclusion

Today we have noticed some things about the journey which we are traveling, and the road map that guides us. Never forget that we are just strangers, travelers, and wanderers in this mortal world. King David understood this. Just before he died he prayed unto God before the congregation of the children of Israel, “**For we are strangers before thee, and**

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The Women at the Sepulchre

"In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. . . And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him." (Matt. 28:1, 5-9).

It is touching to behold the love and devotion that Mary Magdalene, Mary, Salome and various other women had for their Lord and Savior. They not only followed Him, but their faith was manifested by their actions in active ministering and serving. They didn't talk about what they were going to do one day, but were presently busy. And in the end, they literally and physically held Him by the feet and worshipped Him.

Their thoughts were firmly fixed upon the Lord. After His crucifixion and the Sabbath was over, they rose at dawn to go see His sepulchre. Even though He had died, they were still seeking Him and wanted to minister unto Him by anointing His body with spices and ointments. It is as though they couldn't rest until they knew what happened to their Savior and were able to anoint His body with these spices. Their adoration and affection stands out as a great witness to all women.

An angel met the women at the sepulchre and told them that their Lord was not there, but risen. He told them to go and tell His disciples. Therefore the women **"departed quickly"** and even ran to go about their task. They didn't wait for a convenient time or delay in any way. They obeyed immediately. Their obedience shows forth how we, too, are to have an obedient spirit and be busy in the work the Lord has given us.

One time when we lived in the highlands of Papua New Guinea, Frank

and several other preachers went on a mission trip to the other side of the mountains. They were scheduled to preach at two churches that were about five miles apart. After the first church services were over, quite a few people asked for a ride to the second church so they could hear the sermon there too. There wasn't room in the truck for so many people though and priority had to be given to just a few. Therefore some decided to stay and some started walking. But one older lady started running. Since the road was actually a torn-up dirt trail with a lot of holes in it, the truck rarely got out of second gear. The older lady who was running or jogging was able to keep pace with the speed of the vehicle. She ended up running the whole distance and arrived when they did. Frank and the other brethren were amazed at not only the health and stamina she had for her age, but her desire to hear the Word of God preached. It was as if she, too, couldn't rest until she found out more about her Lord and Savior.

In the text, these women left the sepulchre with both fear and great joy. They were somewhat frightened but yet joyful of all the things they had seen and heard. Matthew Henry states, "Holy fear has joy attending it. They that serve the Lord with reverence, serve him with gladness." Sometimes when we do jobs of serving and ministering, which is almost always behind the scenes, it is easy to feel unappreciated and then lack joy in our work. However when our minds are fixed on the Lord, as these women had their minds fixed, our serving and ministering will be a delight and great joy. We will gladly do whatever tasks need done.

Another thing we can notice is that these women were running to do their errand when the Lord met them along the way and greeted them. Here was an unexpected blessing! While they were busy doing the work that was asked of them, the very One whom they were seeking appeared. What rejoicing they must have felt in seeing Him again after all of the heartache and confusion of the previous days' events. How their hearts must have overflowed. They fell down and held him by His feet and worshipped Him. He was not only their Lord and Savior, but their Mighty King.

Last, it didn't seem to matter to these women what anyone else did. By God's grace, they were determined to follow Jesus no matter what. Their time and energy were consumed with thoughts of Him. Their actions showed the

Lord meant everything to them, and they longed for His presence and His fellowship. May God strengthen and enable us to follow their example.

"The best evidence of our having the truth is walking in the truth." --- Unknown

"We may enjoy many new things, but Godly values are as old as creation and cannot be improved upon." ---Unknown

Road Map to Glory

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sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding" (1 Chron. 29:15). And in the New Testament, James said, **"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away"** (James 4:13-14). Our eternal life awaits us. I only hope and pray that as we travel the way through this mortal life, we will each of us plot our course using the *Road Map to Glory*.

It Ain't Hereditary

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when they discover that there really isn't a Santa Claus? Will they doubt what we have taught them about Jesus? Think about it! After all, our modern society and culture has attributed the attributes of Christ to Santa Claus; omniscience, omnipresence, etc.

The principle is seen in the two basic tests given to the Old Testament Jews for judging the prophets. These 'tests,' however, required some basic fundamental knowledge and patience.

The first (in the order we find them in Scripture) is Deut. 13:1-3, **"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."**

This presupposes that the other test has been applied, but we will look at that test later. The test here also presupposed that you have some basic Bible knowledge. That involves some good "doctrinal" knowledge as well. It addresses the 'signs and wonders,' the so-called miracles done by many false prophets in the

name of Christianity. Hear their pleas as recorded in the words of Scripture! **"Have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?...For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders...But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God."**

To know error, one must first know truth. If we have been brought up on error, no matter the 'good intentions,' it becomes harder to discern the truth. We do not have the space in a forum such as this to even begin to delineate all the little, perhaps well-intended falsehoods that have been attached to the gospel accounts; attachments that serve nothing other than to make you feel like you either have done, or can do something.

After we look at the second test of the prophets we will connect these 'tests of the prophets' with our opening text, and if God permits, draw an application.

The second test is found in Deut. 18:20-22. **"But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it"**

This test has less application in our day because only a few 'fringe' movements seem to still believe there are prophets in our midst, that is in the sense of predicting future events. (Cf. 1 Cor. 13:8) That is not our point here! We only mention this because as recently as the 90's we have been confronted with a false prophet on our west coast who, despite his ignominious failure in 1994, has still misled many who follow him. His prediction of Christ's return in 1994 was wrong. Since then he has changed his teaching several times since, trying to justify his non-biblical pronouncements. His 'prophecies' failed and he is leading believers away from solid Bible truth. He gets an 'F' on both tests.

Unfortunately, then as now, the people didn't/don't practice these tests. Professing Christianity today is so short on Bible knowledge that they are easily led astray by the many errors of the day, like those we hinted at earlier, which are a little more subtle than the glaring errors of Harold Camping.

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It Ain't Hereditary

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We have been led to understand, as a society, that Christianity is almost hereditary, despite the obvious evidence to the contrary. Oh, how many times we have heard it explained that Dad, Grampa, or some other close relative, was a "Baptist Preacher," as if that fact would somehow imply that the speaker was also a Christian. The Jews of Jesus' day had that same mentality; a mentality that John the Baptist had to refute. **"And think 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."**

John the Baptist bluntly addressed that issue, **"for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham"** (Luke 3:8). The Lord also addressed that thinking, **"Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham"** (John 8:39).

We don't need to worry about prophetic utterances. We have all the prophecy we need, or are supposed to have, in the completed canon of Scripture – the 66 books of our Bible – without either the Apocrypha or the speculative, prophetic books such as the 'Left Behind' series.

But of far greater damage is the assumption of heaven that we are given by so many 'men of the cloth'; an anti-scriptural assumption that grants automatic heaven to most everybody with the possible exception of Stalin, Hitler, Saddam Hussein, and Osama Bin-Laden. An assumption based on a minimal moral ethic that our culture accepts, and even these men were living by their accepted, cultural morality.

Heaven is not automatic! Neither is it hereditary! It is by the grace of God, but even that does not mean that all people will go to heaven when they die, for it is **"By grace, through faith!" "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"** (John 3:18, italics mine).

But neither is salvation based on the sincerity of belief! You can sincerely believe what is wrong! Oh, the manifold illustrations we could use, from taking the wrong medicine to the airplane crew that went down in the Sahara Desert during WW II because the crew didn't believe their instruments (you don't believe the biblical statements) but sincerely believed their instincts (as you sincerely believe your human reasoning).

That faith is only good if it is based on truth! Please note what Jesus said, **"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth"** (John 17:17, italics mine).

In fact, the very verse that teaches us that salvation is by grace, through faith (Eph. 2:8) goes on to teach us that, that very faith is the gift of God, **"and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"** But how does faith come? **"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."** (Rom. 10:17)

If we were to try to put the events of salvation in chronological order, we would have to organize them like this (again, contrary to the misleading concept that passes for evangelism today): First, regeneration – because the spiritually dead can't believe, repent, or otherwise respond to the gospel message. Second, repentance – because no one will see any need of coming to Christ without repentance. Then, faith – because once one sees himself as the sinner we all are, he needs faith to believe that a Holy, Just, and Righteous God would ever send His Only Begotten Son to die for him.

Then, that faith - if it is real, God given faith - will take action. The verb 'receive,' in John 1:11 & 12, is in 'active voice.' That means, the subject (you) produces the action. Faith that is real will turn to Christ – And it will show itself in a changed life.

Hear again the words of Scripture! That very verse that has taught us that salvation is by grace, through faith; and the gift of God; not of works (cf. Titus 3:5, **"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy"**) goes on to teach us that it produces good works. **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"** (Eph. 2:10). **"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works"** (James 2:18).

May God be pleased to grant you regeneration, to perceive and understand; repentance, to bring you to Christ; and faith to put your full trust and confidence in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.



Witness of the Lord

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of which is the gospel message of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

Many different lines of thought could be taken on this theme of witnessing for the Lord. At present let's now consider four things I think are necessary in our witnessing.

1. Spirituality is needed (our testimony is a result of the work of the Spirit of God).

First of all, let us consider that those that are to tell of the works of God must have experienced the work of God. Christ in Acts 1 is, of course, speaking to believers and more specifically the Lord's

Church. Remember our definition above, a witness is someone who has seen or knows something and can competently give evidence and speak concerning those things experienced. Someone who has not experienced the grace of God is a very poor advocate of the Gospel. Great harm has been, and continues to be done, by those who claim to be servants of God yet know not the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Christ said, **"they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch"** (Matt. 15:14). Theirs and most modern evangelism is centered around human ability to deliver oneself and man's will.

This may seem elementary, but one must be saved to be a proper witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. And may I say that all of God's children ought to be witnesses for the Lord Jesus. That will be the desire of the converted individual's heart to tell others of the gracious Saviour who has shown mercy to them. Remember when John the Baptist had directed Andrew and another disciple to Christ. The Bible says, **"He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, we have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus"** (John 1:41-42). To bring others to Jesus, oh, that surely is our desire. Sometimes I think, and I speak from personal experience, we perhaps get caught up in the glorious doctrine of the Sovereignty of God in salvation and we forget that we have a job to do. Believers and most especially the Lord's church have a responsibility to go preach the gospel. In fact I think that all scriptural labors & missions will be done out of the Lord's Church. That is the place for the Christian to labor in the New Testament age.

Another thing that I would observe from our text is that God's people were to wait on the Spirit of God. **"But ye shall receive, power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses..."** It was after the marvelous manifestation of the Spirit of God. (See Acts 1:5, and Acts 2:4) After the Spirit of God fell upon them we read in Chapter 2 verse 11, **"we do hear them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."**

To often we don't seek and sometimes outright ignore the direction of the Spirit and the teachings of God's word that declares that we ought to be a light as cities set on hill and candles on candlesticks. Surely we ought to be open believers and witnesses for the Lord. Or at other times we may be tempted to follow scripts like the telemarketer that calls your home at dinnertime. Certainly there are many programs that guarantee the Christian worker success in bringing folks to Christ. These programs leave out the real preaching of the Gospel and the working of the Almighty Spirit of

God. We'll have more on this later.

I am not saying that we are to wait on the Spirit and expect numerous Pentecosts. We know that instance was a special sign given especially for Jews to manifest, among other things, God's approval and empowering of His church. Every believer has the Spirit of God dwelling within him (Rom 8:9). Those that have the Spirit of God ought to be led by the Spirit. Rom. 8:14 declares: **"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."** We then, must wait on God's direction in our efforts. Then let us go forward praying for the conversion of lost souls accomplished only by the working of the Almighty Spirit of God.

May our preaching be entered into with a solemn and sincere prayer. May our efforts of witnessing to the lost and those in doctrinal error be directed by the Spirit of God!

2. Scripturality (in our methods and means) is needed.

We have already alluded to this earlier. Our witnessing, our preaching must be grounded in the Scriptures. One looks in vain in the Holy Scriptures to find such modern inventions as the altar call or the mourner's bench. Modern evangelism has a program to generate professions and so called conversions but is lacking in genuine results. And often time assemblies are filled with unbelievers. Why?, because their methods are unscriptural.

These assemblies bring in the lost with entertainment and things that excite the flesh and are appealing to the lost. Gadgets and gimmicks are tried and the means is justified they think by their desired end. Yet they do not give the unbelievers what they truly need and that is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our message begins with the holiness and righteousness of God contrasted with the sinfulness and wickedness of man (Psa. 14:2-3). The Bible later declares, **"For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not"** (Eccl. 7:20). And also: **"Lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions"** (Eccl. 7:29).

We need to declare that man is responsible before God, and God will

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Witness of the Lord

(Continued from page 285) ♦

hold him accountable for his actions in this life (Acts 17:30-31). We need to preach not only the love of God, but also the judgments and wrath of God. That man has really fallen and is totally depraved, unable of himself to draw nigh unto God or please God (Rom 8:7-8). That man is in a state of condemnation before God not just a little off course, but rather he is dead in trespasses and sins.

May the grand theme of Repentance not be omitted as it is in the message of others. God help us to be like the disciples in Mark 6:12, **"And they went out, and preached that men should repent."** There was no grander evangelistic program than this. May the Lord grant us grace to preach repentance and faith and declare the whole gospel. Let us point sinners to a Saviour who is all powerful and able to save. This is a picture far different than the common caricatures of a god that is painted from the modern pulpit.

"And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:20-21).

Let us preach Christ and Christ crucified (Acts 2:21-23)! And above all let us pray that our gospel would be accompanied by the powerful working of the Spirit of God. Oh that our gospel would not come in word only but in power.

3. Sincerity (genuine desire and boldness to speak of the things of God) is needed.

"Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:22-23).

No one I believe was more sincere or genuine than the apostle Paul. He had almost innumerable opportunities to hold back a little or compromise a little. Under certain persecutions and trials the apostle continued to witness to the grace of God in his life and the life of others. One of his chief joys in life was to tell others of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 9:16 he says, **"woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."**

Our sincerity needs to be tempered with spirituality and scripturality. As everyone knows it is possible to be sincere but to be sincerely wrong. The great apostle Paul was both sincere and

even conscientious before his conversion. Christ said, **"Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service"** (John 16:2).

Those that would be witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ need to pray for a burden for the lost and those in error. May our zeal be according to knowledge.

"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word" (Acts 4:29).

God help us to have the courage and sincerity to contend for the Faith once delivered!

4. Consistency (in our conversation and way of life) is needed.

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing" (1 Pet. 3:15-17).

Here, I think, is many times our failure. Our lives are sometimes a model of inconsistency. We say and preach one thing and in form and practice do another. We talk about getting the gospel out, yet show very little effort to do so. God grant it that it be not so!

Our passage in 1 Peter encourages us to **"sanctify the Lord God in your hearts"** and to set God apart as Holy and having the preeminence in our lives. And to be ready to give answer to all that ask and inquire as to our hope and faith. Notice he says **"with meekness and fear."** This is serious business and not to be taken lightly.

Notice he also talks about having a good conscience and a good conversation. Our conversation in the Bible is not speaking to one another, but our life's testimony. It is our overall manner of life. May it be consistent with God's Holy Word. Christ said in Luke 6:46 **"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"**

So in effect we are witnesses in at least two different ways: First, with our manner of lives including our actions, demeanor, attitude, lifestyle and so on, Second, by speaking and declaring verbally the truth concerning Christ and His Word. By the way, we can preach Christ in both ways, by our lives and by our words, and I don't know if you can say one is more important than another.

Here is the challenge to live God honoring lives in the evil world, to be a separate peculiar people, and to be pilgrims abstaining from fleshly lusts that war against the soul. The life we live truly is an epistle read by all. Your friends your family and associates all are

looking on.

Genesis 19:14 says, **"And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law."**

I think this is one of the saddest episodes in the Bible. There is just Lot with his soul vexed daily, yet continuing in that ungodly place, silent without a real testimony, and when he speaks up it's too late. He seems as one that mocked.

God help us as churches, as families,

as individuals be a witness, and bear witness of the Light, the Lord Jesus Christ, that all men through Him might believe and have eternal life. Our prayer is that we as God's people and as Baptists would be like John the Baptist. Read what the Bible says of him in John 1:7, **"The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe."** Of course John was declaring Christ the only true Light. Let's continue to point people to the Lord Jesus Christ. In Him only can one find salvation.



One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism

By Timothy Hille
of Ashland, Illinois

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:1-14).

We do not, as Baptists, have a creed or



a catechism. We believe that our only rule of faith and practice is the Word of God. We believe that the Scriptures are the revelation of God to man, that they are without error, and that they alone are to

be our guide in all matters. We believe that man must live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. We believe that God's ministers and God's churches ought to proclaim and teach all the counsel of God. We believe that only the Scriptures teach the way in which men can be saved and have life with God. We believe that all men shall be judged according to the Word of God.

In the verses which we have read, Paul speaks to the church which was at Ephesus concerning unity and oneness. He is writing to them concerning the believer's walk: **"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."** The walk of every member of every one of the Lord's New Testament churches is to be guided by the Word of God. **"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart"** (Ps. 119:1-2). **"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"** (Ps. 119:105). **"Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me"** (Ps. 119:133). **"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come"** (John 16:13). The divine guide of the Christian life, the Holy Spirit, leads children of God in

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One Lord, One Faith

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understanding and in obeying the Word of God. In the church of the living God, there ought to be a oneness of belief and a oneness of practice. Everyone ought to be united in believing and practicing the teachings of the Word of God. We ought to all be united in love one with another, and we ought to be united in serving the Lord our God according to the teachings and precepts of His Word. If we are guided by the Holy Spirit, then we ought to believe and practice the same things. We all profess to have been saved the same way, to have been led to the same baptism, and to love and worship the same Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

No church can be a true church except they believe in **“one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”** When the Bible here says **“one”** it means the only one. There is **“one Lord”** and no other, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God incarnate. There is **“one faith”** and only one, which is the faith of God’s elect, the faith which is by the grace of God, the faith which is commonly held by all whom God has saved. There is only **“one baptism,”** meaning only one kind of baptism that is right and acceptable with God, which is the **“one baptism”** which God has commanded in His Word of all them that repent of their sins and trust in the name of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ. These are the fundamental things which are required in order for any body to be a body of the Lord’s, for any church to be a church of the living God. If they do not have these beliefs and practices, then they cannot be Christ’s.

I. “One Lord.”

We believe in one Lord, which is our Lord Jesus Christ. **“Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost”** (I Cor. 12:3). The Holy Spirit reveals Jesus as the Lord. **“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him”** (I Cor. 8:6). **“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ”** (Acts 2:36). **“Wherefore God also hath**

highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11). The Bible teaches that Jesus is the Lord of all things. **“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool”** (Ps. 110:1). **“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?”** (Matt. 22:41-45). If He be Lord, then He is God. **“And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God”** (John 20:26-28).

This title gives Jesus the position of sovereign, of ruler, of having the power to decide and determine what should be done with any and with all things. This title denotes supremacy. **“He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all”** (John 3:31). We believe that there is only One to whom all power belongs, only One who ought to be worshipped, only One who can save and who can condemn, and only One who rules the universe, and that One is Jesus Christ. **“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses**

the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest” (Rev. 15:1-4).

When a person is saved, that person receives Jesus as Lord. **“And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do”** (Acts 9:1-6). The accusation that was used to incriminate Christians during the first century was that they were being disloyal to the Roman emperor, Caesar, because they called Jesus Lord, which meant that Jesus was their Prince and their King. **“But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things”** (Acts 17:5-8). Calling Jesus “Lord” means that He is equal with God, and that He is God. **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made”** (John 1:1-3). **“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all**

things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell” (Col. 1:15-19). **“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power”** (Col. 2:9-10). When a person is saved, that person does not merely believe that Jesus was a good person or a special person. That person believes that Jesus is the Son of God, God in the likeness of sinful flesh, who died for sins, was buried, and rose again. **“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God”** (Acts 8:36-37).

As Lord, He is the only rightful head of His kind of church. We do not believe that any person other than Jesus can be the head of a true church. **“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all”** (Eph. 1:20-23). Jesus is the only One who is in charge of His churches. He does not have a pope, a viceroy, or a vicar on earth to take His place. He leads and guides His churches by His Word and by His Holy Spirit. He exhorts, comforts, reproves, rebukes, admonishes, and corrects His churches Himself. **“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him**

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One Lord, One Faith

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that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:1-7). Even pastors are told not to behave as lords over God's churches. **"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock"** (I Pet. 5:1-3).

II. "One Faith."

Those who are saved have the same faith. They have the faith of God's elect, the faith of Jesus Christ, like precious faith. **"My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons"** (James 2:1). **"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ"** (II Pet. 1:1). **"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour; To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour"** (Tit. 1:1-4). The faith of the gospel is here meant, as is the faith once delivered unto the saints. **"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel"** (Phil. 1:27). **"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"** (Jude 3). This "one faith" is the body of teaching of the gospel, contained in the Word of God, which every saved person has believed. Therefore those who are saved are said to have the common faith, the common salvation, and like precious faith. They all have the same one as far as it is the same kind. They have believed the same thing, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died for their sins upon the cross.

You did not know everything that

the Bible teaches the moment you were saved; but you did believe the Bible. You believed that which must be believed first in order to believe anything aright, and that is that you could not come to God except by Jesus Christ. You believed that He died for your sins upon the cross. You believed that He rose from the grave after three days and nights in the earth. You believed that He was able to give you eternal life. Nevertheless, there is more that you ought to know and that you ought to believe. There is "one faith." **"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ"** (Eph. 4:12). There is only one system of teachings that we have as children of God, that which we have received from the Lord. **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen"** (Matt. 28:19-20). This church has only one body of doctrine, that which is contained in the Word of God. We have only one thing to believe, and that is THUS SAITH THE LORD.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (II Tim. 4:7). We are to keep the faith, to continue in and progress in the teachings of the Word of God, being obedient to them and not letting them go. There are three things which every church and every child of God can do with regards to the faith. They can (1) continue in the faith; (2) contend for the faith; or (3) make shipwreck of the faith. **"And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God"** (Acts 14:21-22). Paul and Barnabas told those who had been saved and baptized and added unto the Lord's kind of church to continue in the faith. **"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister"** (Col. 1:23). You ought to become grounded and settled in the faith, in the teachings of the Word of God, the teaching of which you first believed when you were saved. **"Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme"** (I Tim. 1:19-20). Some have made shipwreck of the faith by not seeking to live in

obedience to the teachings of the Bible, not holding a good conscience toward God and men by living righteously.

III. "One Baptism."

Every member of the church at Ephesus had been baptized. Every member of every one of the Lord's churches, if they be a true member, all have had the same baptism, for there is only "one." They have all had the same baptism which Jesus had, when He was baptized of John in the Jordan River. They have had the only kind of baptism that has anything to do with being in the Lord's kind of church, which is water baptism, or immersion in water upon the profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and by the authority of the Lord's kind of church. **"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead"** (Col. 2:12). By baptism, a believer is buried with Christ. The believer publicly demonstrates his or her faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The believer proclaims that he or she died to sin with Christ, and is risen from the deadness of sin by the effectual working power of God in his or her heart and soul and spirit.

Some people want this "baptism" that is here spoken of to be Holy Spirit baptism. They want to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit never baptizes anyone. Some believe that you have to pray to receive the Holy Spirit after you have believed, and until you receive the Holy Spirit and have spoken in "tongues" or some such thing you are not truly saved. That is religious poppycock. The Holy Spirit leads men, women, boys, and girls who are saved to water baptism and membership in a true, New Testament, independent, missionary Baptist church. **"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit"** (I Cor. 12:12-13). There is a point in time at which every member of this church received the Spirit of Christ, and that was the moment you were saved, the moment you repented of your sins, the moment you believed on and received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. That point in time was not the same time for you as it was for me or for someone else; but there was such a time when you were born again and became a child of God: otherwise, you ought not to be a member of this or any other church, because you are not yet saved. There is a point in time at which every member of this church received scriptural baptism. You were led by the same Holy Spirit to be baptized, and to be added unto a church such as the one which Jesus instituted while here during His earthly

ministry. You were immersed in water, picturing the death and burial of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the washing away of sins by His blood. You came up out of the water, picturing the resurrection of Christ and your spiritual resurrection to walk in newness of life toward God. You were immersed by the authority of one of the Lord's churches, which are the only institutions authorized by God to administer scriptural baptism. **"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God"** (John 1:29-34). **"When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples)"** (John 4:1-2). **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"** (Matt. 28:19). John the Baptist had authority from God to baptize. Jesus had authority to baptize, and He gave authority to His first church, which was initially made up of the apostles, to baptize. If this is not the kind of baptism which you have, then you do not have the "one baptism" which the Bible teaches.

Until a believer is baptized, he or she has no place in the Lord's church. He or she has not been obedient to the first command of the gospel following salvation. He or she has not put on Christ. He or she has not acknowledged the leadership of the Holy Spirit of God and the teaching of the Word of God. We do not believe that a person has to be baptized in order to be saved. We believe that God will lead saved people to scriptural baptism and true church membership, where they can serve and worship Him according to the teachings of His Word. We believe that baptism is essential, not to salvation, but to obedience on the part of a saved individual. We believe that only the Lord's churches have the authority to baptize, because Christ gave them the command to baptize those who believe. We believe that a person will not be able to serve God aright until they have scriptural baptism and true church membership. **"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their**

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Mini-Edition by Joseph Harris

Chairman of Biblical Studies
Southeastern Baptist
College, Laurel, Mississippi
www.miniedition.net



Sense and Sensitivity

Sensitivity is a buzz word for the 21st century. We should be sensitive to the needs and plight of others. We should be compassionate when others are hurting and should be sensitive when there is potential for offense. I say this in all sincerity with no trace of sarcasm. Christianity has proven itself to be the most sensitive and caring religion in existence. There is an abundance of hospitals bearing denominational Christian names. Christianity expresses itself fully in ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of others. Jesus was moved with compassion for the multitudes that followed Him and miraculously fed them on more than one occasion. He also alleviated physical suffering by healing many. He wept with His friends Mary and Martha, when their brother Lazarus had died, then He restored life to him.

Having said all of the above, now comes the hard truth. Sense should be used with sensitivity. Extremism seems to dominate in this area. People are super sensitive about race, gender, religion and politics. No one, especially a Christian, should seek to be offensive. I have noticed those who rant about being sensitive to the minority, care little about the feelings of the majority. True sensitivity is consistent and considers all, acknowledging also that not everyone will always be happy or satisfied. 100 % placation of all is impossible.

Sensitization. There is an attempt to sensitize people who are perceived as being "hateful" and intolerant. These "haters" are sometimes required by an employer to attend sensitivity seminars intended to educate in the areas of sexual orientation and gender discrimination.

There are attempts to sensitize the population to the importance of the vanishing spotted owl, endangered Alaskan caribou, diminishing rain forests, freshwater turtles, etc.

We are encouraged to understand the "peaceful" religion of Islam, study the Koran and not practice profiling among young Arab males, thereby being sensitive and not offensive.

Christians are supposed to give up time honored traditions of Christmas displays and greetings, proving sensitivity to those who may not be Christian.

Desensitization. There is also a desensitizing program alive and well. Through incremental exposure in the news and entertainment industry, we are desensitized to the abnormality of homosexuality and told we must

accept as normal what less than 5% of the total population practices. Hollywood's recent gem of perversion, *Brokeback Mountain*, is a fine example. This film contains queer cowboys. What's next? A love story about truckers? The latest piece of propaganda in the news is a story of how straight couples across America are turning out in droves to see this "love" story.

We are desensitized to the horror of murder through abortion when we are shown how poor downtrodden women will be saddled with unwanted children and die in horrible back alley deaths if murder once again becomes illegal. Abortion is called a right, a choice and even birth control. Genocide is also population control, but it is the instrument of dictators, tyrants and despots and is wrong.

We are slowly being desensitized and re-educated in gender and gender roles in society. There are fundamental differences between males and females, yet gender confusion is not uncommon today. We are told there are some "gender neutral" individuals who aren't sure of their sex and/or sexual orientation and are in a quandry trying to decide "what" they are. It's really a simple matter. Boys and men are males and girls and women are females. Men are to be decisive and masculine, protecting and providing for their families while providing spiritual leadership in the home and church. Women give and nurture life, pursuing Motherhood as their highest calling while providing stability as the heart of the family, being a keeper at home and supporting the husband in his leadership.

Sensitivity is important and Christians should be sensitive, but sensitivity should be guided by good old, plain, down to earth common sense. Common sense will also guard against being desensitized.



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heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:37-38).

These are fundamental things which every church of the Lord Jesus Christ holds and practices. These are things which every one of us who are members of this church have in common. Without these things, we would not be a church of the living God. Without these things, we would not be Baptists. We are to preach and teach these things, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." In order for one more soul to be saved, that soul must have this "one Lord," and this "one faith."



Teaching Ministry

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must trust Him to do His work in us, as we trust the Lord to do His work for us.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS TEACHER

The Holy Spirit is an indispensable teacher. We read in I Corinthians 2:11: **"The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."** Then verse 14 of this same chapter tells us that the natural man is totally incapable of understanding spiritual things. He must have a Divine Teacher. No human can know God except he is taught by God, and this the Holy Spirit alone can do. Let preachers, teachers and personal workers forever remember that all is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down to teach men.

The Bible is God's revelation to man, but we cannot understand this revelation unless the Spirit makes it known to us. The natural "eye hath not seen" the "things which God hath prepared for" him, but **"God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit"** (I Cor. 2:9-10). I Corinthians 2:12 declares: **"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."**

We cannot know another man's mind until he communicates it to us. Likewise, we cannot know the purposes of God till they are made known to us by His Holy Spirit. We would have no spiritual knowledge if the Spirit did not reveal it to us.

The Holy Spirit is an infallible teacher. The Apostle John says the Spirit **"teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie. . ."** (I John 2:27). All the Spirit teaches is infallible truth. Jesus promised: **"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth"** (John 16:13).

I read in I Corinthians 2:10 these words: **"The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."** The Spirit knows the things of God because He is one with God. He has exact knowledge of all things. He enters into the depths of God and penetrates into His secret counsels. How the infallible Spirit differs from fallible men! Man can and does sometimes teach people wrong, but the Spirit never. If we despise this Teacher we seek in vain for spiritual wisdom.

The Spirit is an all-sufficient teacher. In I John 2:27 I read from Williams' translation: **"The anointing of the Spirit which you receive still remains in your hearts, and so you have no need that anyone should teach you."** God has ordained pastors for the perfecting of the saints in their work of ministering. Although such teachers are abundantly needed in these days, still **"ye need not that any man teach you."** The teaching of

the Spirit does not supersede ministerial teaching, but it is far superior to it. John is merely showing us that the Spirit is by far a better teacher than any man. Of the Comforter, Christ said: **"He shall teach you all things"** (John 14:26). Who is better able to explain a book than the one who wrote it?

The Spirit of Christ is an unassuming teacher. John 16:13 declares: **"He shall not speak of Himself."** He hides Himself that He might all the more glorify Christ. In this He is an example to all teachers. If the Great Teacher Himself is so unassuming, how should the human teacher be? God help us to show men Christ in our teaching. Paul said: **"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord"** (II Cor. 4:5).

The Spirit's testimony is always in harmony with the words of Christ. This is because the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one. Man's words and the Spirit's often disagree, but the eternal Word and eternal Spirit never do.

THE METHODS OF THE SPIRIT'S TEACHING

He teaches by enlightening the mind. Paul prayed for the Ephesians on this fashion: **"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints"** (Eph. 1:17-18). Even saved church members have need of the enlightening of the Spirit. Paul asked God to give the Ephesians the Spirit of wisdom in order that they might be more and more enlightened. The Spirit has infinite wisdom as one of His attributes. It is His function to work wisdom in believers and reveal spiritual mysteries to the same. Unless the Spirit opens the eyes of even the Lord's own people, the preacher's best effort is but teaching the blind!

The Spirit of the Lord teaches by pointing to the sufferings of Christ. I read in Zechariah 12:10: **"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."** This Divinely wrought vision of a crucified Christ is essential to salvation. Galatians 1:16 makes it plain that Christ must be revealed to the sinner before he can be saved. It was to this Spirit-wrought vision of Christ that our Savior had reference to in John 6:40 when He said: **"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life."**

If you are a saved person and are

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

Should women who attend church services and are not members of the church wear a covering? What if they are lost? Should lost women wear a covering? Lastly what of children (daughters), should they wear a covering, and if so what age should they begin? – Kentucky

Raymond F. Bennett
Beracah Baptist Mission
271 Gray Road
Ithaca, NY 14850-8761

Missionary of
Berea
Baptist Church
PO Box 39
Mantachie, MS 38855



I suspect there is more to this question than immediately meets the eye. To adequately cover this question would require more space than this column allows. We must read the entire passage (1 Cor. 11:3-16), taking into consideration both the immediate context and the overall tenor of Scripture, but we will zero in on v. 5, **“But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.”**

We need to look at two keys both in this verse and the passage, ‘every’ and ‘woman,’ but we will look at them in reverse order.

“Woman” is the general, generic, but yet endearing term used throughout Scripture, referring, according to Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, to a female of any age. From a strict legal application, that fact alone would make the answer to this question an un-categorical ‘yes.’

“Every” is our old friend ‘pas’ (all), meaning all without exception, which emphasizes the comment made above. But the *scope* of all must always be determined by the context. (Too long a subject to discuss here.) The context in this passage is the local church, specifically in the service and/or praying or prophesying.

That would tend to exclude women not participating in those activities in the worship service of church meeting, *but we would like to assume that the women, at least members, gathering for the worship service, would be in the attitude of prayer even if not praying out loud.*

However the question is not about the legitimate requirement, or at least expectation, that women in the Lord’s churches would have their heads covered in the worship service (that seems to be accepted), but in the extent of its application. We suggest that, that application cannot be divorced from the parallel subject of a man’s long hair (v.14-15). Therefore we offer the following 7 applications.

1. If believing women are to have their heads *covered*, then in the same context, the men are to have their heads *uncovered*, i.e.: hats off! I have seen this

violated too often, although not, as I recall, in the Lord’s churches, at least by members.

2. If long hair is given to, and expected of, the woman – as her glory (one of the two reasons she is to cover it in the worship service) then, as made clear in verse 14, the men are to have short hair. Must we put a legalistic measurement at the point where hair is long or short? Or, as verse 14 implies, does not nature itself make that clear?

I am not a scholar in anthropology but the only culture where I have ever seen long hair accepted as a sign of masculinity is in the North American Indian culture. We see ‘long haired men’ in the Old Testament but they are either obviously rebellious, as was Absalom, or a specific vow, as was the Nazarite (also too long to discuss here).

A recently heard argument said that long hair in men was a ‘shame’ but not a sin. That is circular reasoning; looking for a way out. It exposes the ‘shameful’ state of that man’s professed spirituality. If it is a ‘shame’ it most certainly is a ‘sin.’ Besides, the ‘shame’ in this context is not referring to sin, or lack of sin, but shame before men and society. Sadly, our modern culture, led by the entertainment world, including so-called ‘Christian’ entertainers, has lulled us into accepting not only scantily attired women but longhaired men as well.

3. The context is the local church. We cannot expect, or demand, that uninitiated visitors, particularly the lost, will have head coverings, although verse 16 implies that it was the norm in the churches of that day.

4. That same context, with the ‘every’ of v.5, would seem to include single women and daughters. Again, we are dealing with a cultural difference that makes it difficult today because women, living alone, outside of a family entity, were generally recognized as harlots, unlike the single, ‘career women’ of our day.

5. If the ‘head covering’ is to cover her glory, as implied in v. 6, then simply a handkerchief clipped to the top of her hair is mere tokenism and not a head covering. By the same token, buying and wearing fancy scarves also defeats the purpose. The head covering should be plain, clean, and cover the hair. It is to *cover* her glory, not *enhance* her glory.

6. At “what age should they begin?” As early as possible, whether or not they are old enough to understand. It is good training, getting them in the right habit, and is to be explained later, according to

their level of understanding (Prov. 22:6).

7. Finally, while a head covering, worn in obedience to scriptural command, is commendable, it is merely tokenism if the woman (wife or daughter) is not living in a proper attitude of subjection. Our Lord’s absolute authority *will* be enforced, and even *legal* obedience is a good thing, but our Lord surely knows the difference between ‘head’ submission and ‘heart’ submission – and I suggest, the other church members also will soon observe that difference.

We close with this quote from Alford (1810-71), particularly in reference to v. 16. “It is not logical that Paul would spend so much time on the issue and then pass it off as not important enough to contend about. He logically, and in what seems good grammar, makes ‘custom’ the antecedent of ‘seems contentious.’”

RAYMOND BENNETT

Matt James
3756 Pendent Ln.
Columbus, OH 43207

Pastor
Sovereign Grace
Baptist Church
6041 Africa Road
Galena, OH 43021



“But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man” (I Cor. 11:5-7).

The head-covering is not a symbol of salvation but a symbol of headship. I Corinthians 11:3 says, **“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”** Our daughters should wear a covering in the church services because they are under our headship, even if they have not professed faith in Christ. It is up to the fathers to decide at what age to do this. The Bible makes no mention of any age where these things must be practiced. Obviously, it is impractical and unnecessary for an infant to wear a covering. Every father must bring his own children up in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

As far as visitors are concerned, the head-covering must be voluntary. If they

do not believe in a covering, they should not be required to wear one. What good is involuntary service to God? He looks upon the heart more than the externals. **“...man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart”** (I Sam. 16:7).

Many God-fearing saints believe a woman’s hair is her covering. This is a legitimate position even though I don’t agree (I Cor. 11:15). They must have liberty of conscience to do as they believe the Lord commands them.

Children, on the other hand, are under their parents’ headship, who have authority and responsibility over them. We teach our children what is Scriptural and we teach them to honor the headship of their fathers. They wear a covering because God has placed them in their father’s house. We do not have this kind of responsibility over visitors.

MATT JAMES

Tom Ross
6339 County Rd. 15
South Point, OH 45680

Pastor
Mt. Pleasant
Baptist Church
6939 County Rd. 15
Chesapeake, OH 45619



None of the above questions may be answered definitively by reading the passage in First Corinthians chapter eleven. A careful reading reveals that the workman and woman are used in an institutional or generic sense, not referring to a particular man or woman, but to all in general. The age old principles of authority, headship, order, and submission are the leading thoughts of the passage. The passage does not address a distinction between members or non members of the church. Nor does it ever distinguish between saved and lost women. It does not mention the relationship that exists between husband and wife or father and daughter (even though it is implied). There is no reference whatsoever to age.

I find it interesting to note that boys are taught from the earliest of ages to remove their hat when entering the church house. This principle stems from an understanding of the passage under consideration. To be safe, I would recommend that all women, lost or saved, members of the church or not, regardless of age wear the head covering as a symbol of subjection to the authority and headship of the man in the church. Lets say for example that girls are not required to wear the artificial covering until they are 14 years of age. Would they be in rebellion if they wore the covering at 10 years of age, at 8 years old, or 6 years old? Of course not.

Verse 10 states: **“For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head**

◊ (Continued on page 292)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

What is the tree of life spoken of in Genesis 3:22? – Texas

Todd Bryant
3000 Hillswood Circle
Northport, AL 35473

Pastor
Sovereign Grace
Baptist Church
12859 Martin Road
Spur
Northport, AL 35473



“And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil” (Gen. 2:9).

“And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever” (Gen. 3:22).

“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Rev. 22:2).

The question before us is both broad and difficult. Obviously, we do know it is a tree and that it bears some sort of fruit. We know that this fruit has some sort of power which causes those that eat of it to live forever. We know that Adam and Eve were put out of the Garden of Eden so that they couldn't eat of the tree of life and live forever. We know that the tree of life will be ever present through the eternal ages as it's spoken of being in the New Earth in Revelation. Anything, more than this, is pure speculation. I don't have any further information to give and have never heard or read of any more information.

Hopefully, some of the other writers can help you and me.

TODD BRYANT

Matt James
3756 Pendent Ln.
Columbus, OH 43207

Pastor
Sovereign Grace
Baptist Church
6041 Africa Road
Galena, OH 43021



“And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out

the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life” (Gen. 3:22-24).

The tree of life was part of God's original creation **“And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil” (Gen. 2:9).** It appears that the tree of life would have sustained Adam and Eve forever had they not been cast out of the Garden of Eden. However, after Adam and Eve had sinned, God cast them out and guarded the way to the tree of life with Cherubims and a flaming sword.

There is nothing else written about the tree of life in the whole Bible until Revelation 2:7 where those who overcome are promised that they will be allowed to eat of it **“...To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”** Then in Revelation 22:2 the leaves of the tree of life are said to be for the healing of the nations. **“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”**

Revelation 22:14 pronounces blessing on all those who obey God's commandments because they have the right to this tree of life. **“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”** This is basically all the Bible has to say about the tree of life.

MATT JAMES

Tom Ross
6339 County Rd. 15
South Point, OH 45680

Pastor
Mt. Pleasant
Baptist Church
6939 County Rd. 15
Chesapeake, OH 45619



The tree of life was planted in the center of the Garden of Eden. After the fall of Adam and Eve, God drove them out of the Garden and placed cherubims and a flaming sword to guard the tree of life from intruders. It appears from simply reading the text that if man would eat of the tree of life he could live forever in his mortal body. Since the fall of man, the way to the tree was blocked so that man would experience the pain and

consequences of sin which is death. It is obvious that God did not want man to partake of this tree in his natural, sinful, fallen state which is why He guarded it in such a secure manner.

Typically, the tree of life and its fruit could only be had if a worthy sacrifice voluntarily fell upon the sword of Divine justice, thus opening the way to eternal life that the fruit of the tree yielded. This of course speaks of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ who acted as a substitute for the elect by bearing their sin and its infinite penalty. Thus, Christ is The Way to God (John 14:6).

Henry Morris wrote:

“The fruit of this tree would, if eaten regularly, have enabled even mortal, dying men to live forever (v. 22). It is noteworthy that this tree will be growing in profusion in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:2), for the ‘health’ of the nations. Exactly how a physical fruit could be of such rich nourishment as to halt the aging process in a human body is not within our limited understanding at this time...Since God is the giver of life, He can give it either directly or indirectly, through whatever secondary agency He might choose. In the absence of any contextual indication that this ‘tree of life’ was a mere symbol of something, and in the current absence of any scientific understanding of what causes aging and death at all, there is no reason not to think of this tree as a literal tree.

...Although a just punishment was involved, God's deeper reason was pedagogical. It would have been calamitous had they continued in a perfect environment as sinful people, especially eating of the life-tree fruit and living on indefinitely in such a condition. They and their descendants to many generations must be taught the true nature and effects of sin, and of living out of fellowship with God, so that they could eventually come to know and understand and love Him fully, as Savior, as well as Maker and Provider.” (*The Genesis Record*, pp. 87 and 131).

TOM ROSS

Raymond F. Bennett
Beracah Baptist Mission
271 Gray Road
Ithaca, NY 14850-8761

Missionary of
Berea
Baptist Church
PO Box 39
Mantachie, MS 38855



Genesis 3:22, **“And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now,**

lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:”

The ‘Tree of Life’ comes up 10 times in the KJV, (Gen. 2:9; 3:22; 3:24; [Prov. 3:18; 11:30; 15:4] Rev. 2:7; 22:2; 22:14) and according to some textual critics, an eleventh time (Rev. 22:19) in the Greek. That eleventh time should not be problematic because even there, whether tree or book the sense is the same.

The bracketed verses from Proverbs are figurative in nature as opposed to a literal tree, but the figurative sense that Solomon uses also helps to understand what the Tree of Life is.

Genesis 2:9 merely mentions the Tree of Life as one of the various features of the Garden of Eden, albeit giving it special mention and locality along with the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. We have no real description of the tree or its function until Revelation 22:2, **“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”** However we may safely gather that the fruit of the Tree of Life was the same in the Garden as it is in the Holy City, i.e.: nourishment for the spiritual bodies in glory and eternity.

Obviously, both the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil were trees producing fruit that is reserved for those who have obtained (*obtained, not attained*) eternal life. Adam and Eve, having fallen from the spiritual glory and estate in which they were created, were no longer worthy of eternal life.

Remember that twice, during His 40 days on earth between His resurrection and ascension, Jesus partook of something to eat (Luke 24:41-43; John 21:9-10). It is safe to assume that our resurrected bodies will eat, much like our mortal bodies, albeit I suppose it could be rightly said there that we will ‘live to eat’ rather than ‘eat to live.’ (Won't it be nice to be able to eat pleasurable food, according to desire, without having to worry about gaining too much weight?)

Obviously, the Tree of Life produced fruit that would sustain eternal life. This would be food ‘beyond’ the nourishment of the health sustaining food available for our mortal bodies today, or else Adam and Eve would not have been restrained from ever again having access to it.

Not knowing how long Adam and Eve were in the garden before the fall, we can only speculate that the same preventive grace that prevented conception before the fall (which we see as part of God's eternal plan) also prevented them from partaking of the fruit that would keep them alive eternally. However, born again individuals will again have access

◊ (Continued on page 292)

Forum #1

(Continued from page 290) ♦

because of the angels.” When God’s Word says we ought to do something, we should simply obey the command regardless of age. My reasoning may be a bit too simplistic for some and not philosophical enough for others. However, my simple premise is this, if all women and girls wore an artificial covering in our church services there would be no danger that any of the fairer sex would be found disobeying the above Scripture. Since it is not a sin for any woman to wear an artificial head covering as a symbol of submission to the man’s authority in the church it is not a sin for all women and girls to wear one.

TOM ROSS

love their own bodies (Eph. 5:28). Men are to love their wives the way that Jesus loved His church and died for it (Eph. 5:25). If a husband loves his wife in this manner, the wife will find it much easier to submit.

TODD BRYANT



Forum #2

(Continued from page 291) ♦

to that blessed fruit as part of their eternal reward in eternity (Rev. 2:7; 22:2; 22:14).

It should be interesting to note that the ‘right’ to the Tree of Life (Rev. 22:14) is ‘authority’ to partake of the Tree of Life – the same word used for ‘power’ in Matthew 28:18.

RAY BENNETT



Berea Baptist Banner Financial Report 1-1-2006 to 1-31-2006

Beginning Balance\$8,270.62

RECEIPTS:

A. D. Richardson, Cedarville, WV	100.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	22.80
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	200.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Berea M. B. C., Mansfield, OH	50.00
Berea M. B. C., Westpoint, TN	150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX	100.00
Bible Believers B. C., Naples, ID	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Central Avenue B. C., Tamps, FL	100.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	25.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Hillcrest B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Joe Jurzec, Richmond, IL	25.00
Landmark B. C., Moncks Corner, SC	75.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	100.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM	1,000.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testamant B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Richard Hammers, Ararat, NC	5.00
Rose Young, Senatobia, MS	29.55
South Park M. B. C., Seattle, WA	25.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Warren, OH	75.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	205.50
Dividing Checks	159.45
Anon	225.00
Sub Total	\$4,237.30
TOTAL	\$12,507.92

EXPENDITURES:

Printing	634.69
Postage	1,026.12
Wages	2,600.00
FICA	198.85
Dividing checks	159.45
Total Expenditures	4,619.11
.....	7,888.81
Bank Charges	-18.40
ENDING BALANCE	\$7,870.41



THE

BIBLE NEWSPAPER

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

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

GROUP CLAIMS CHURCH BEING “FEMINIZED”

(EP)--An organization calling itself “Church for Men” says that men have given up their responsibility for leadership in the home and the church. According to a study on the group’s web-site, the typical U.S. Congregation draws an adult crowd that’s 61% female and only 39% male. On any given Sunday there are 13 million more adult women than men in America’s churches. Midweek activities often draw 70 to 80 percent female participants. The majority of church employees are women (except for ordained clergy, who are overwhelmingly male). As many as 90 percent of the boys who are raised in church will abandon it by their 20th birthday. Many of these boys will never return. More than 90 percent of American men believe in God, and five out of six call themselves Christians. But only two out of six attend church on a given Sunday. The average man accepts the reality of Jesus Christ, but fails to see any value in going to church.

WALGREENS SUED OVER CONSCIENCE RIGHTS

(EP)--Four Illinois pharmacists filed a lawsuit last week claiming they were put on indefinite, unpaid leave from the drug-store chain Walgreens for refusing to dispense the so-called morning-after pill, even though state law protects them from dispensing morally objectionable prescriptions.

Plan B, known as the morning-after pill, can sometimes cause an early abortion.

Since 1977, the Illinois Health Care Right of Conscience Act has protected medical workers. In April, Gov. Rod Blagojevich issued an executive order mandating that pharmacists dispense the morning-after pill.

PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTION BAN STRUCK DOWN TWICE

(EP)--A pair of federal appeals courts today struck down the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, making it increasingly likely that the U.S. Supreme Court will step in to settle the issue of the law’s constitutionality. The act, passed by Congress and signed by President Bush in 2003, has never been enforced because of legal challenges. In two Jan. 31 rulings, a three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, considering a challenge to the law filed by abortion activists in San Francisco, unanimously upheld a lower-court finding that the ban didn’t pass constitutional muster. The law, the panel said, placed an “undue burden” on a woman’s right to an abortion. Hours later, the 2nd

U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled similarly in a case originally out of New York. In July, a third appeals court, the 8th Circuit, upheld another lower court ruling that found the ban unconstitutional.

STUDY SAYS MEGACHURCHES GROWING QUICKLY IN SIZE, REACH

(EP)--A new survey on U.S. Protestant megachurches shows they are among the nation’s fastest-growing faith groups, drawing younger people and families with contemporary programming and conservative values.

The number of megachurches, defined as having a weekly attendance of at least 2,000, has doubled in five years to 1,210. The megachurches have an estimated combined income of \$7.2 billion and draw nearly 4.4 million people to weekly services, according to “Megachurches Today 2005.”

The South has the most share with 49 percent, including Texas with 13 percent. California led the nation with 14 percent but is part of a declining western region with 25 percent, seven percentage points lower than five years ago.

While large churches have flourished throughout history, early records show that the U.S. had about six large churches in the early part of the 20th century. That number grew to 16 by 1960 and then in the 1970s, they began to proliferate and draw public attention.

Other findings:

- The average yearly income of megachurches is \$6 million, while they spend on average \$5.6 million each year.

- The states with highest concentrations of megachurches are California (14 percent), Texas (13 percent), Florida (7 percent) and Georgia (6 percent).

JAILING OF THREE CHRISTIAN WOMEN EMBOLDENED MUSLIM RADICALS

(EP)--For three Christian women jailed for including Muslim children in a church program in West Java, Indonesia, the prospects of winning an early release from prison grew dim late last month. Indonesia’s Constitutional Court refused to consider a legal challenge filed on behalf of Rebekka Zakaria, Eti Pangesti, and Ratna Bangun, who are serving three-year sentences handed down by a West Javan court in September. The court convicted the Sunday school teachers under Indonesia’s Child Protection

♦ (Continued on page 293)

Todd Bryant
3000 Hillswood Circle
Northport, AL 35473

Pastor
Sovereign Grace
Baptist Church
12859 Martin Road
Spur
Northport, AL 35473

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God” (I Cor. 11:3).

“For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered” (I Cor. 11:6).

These questions have often been asked. It seems that, in asking the questions, one might attempt to relieve some females of their God-given place. It appears that the subject of this chapter is merely “headship.” The order of headship is God, Christ, man and woman. This is not to lessen the importance of the woman in either the church or the home. Many women are much more faithful Christians with much more knowledge than their husbands. Still yet, they have their place under the man as far as headship is concerned. This having been said, the chapter informs us that the woman is just below the man in the order of headship. This doesn’t speak of only saved women or grown women. All women, by divine order of creation, are below the men in headship. Therefore, the requirement of all women would be the same. Every woman should wear a head covering in the worship service as a symbol that she is in subjection to the man—primarily, her husband. It matters not whether she is saved or lost; young or old.

Many men have taken these truths to the extreme position. Many men have tried to rule their wives with a rod of iron and treat her like a glorified slave. This is absolutely NOT the teaching of the Bible. Men are to love their wives as they

Bible & The Newspaper

(Continued from page 292) ♦

Act, which prohibits influencing children to convert to a different religion.

The women allowed their Muslim Sunday school students to participate in the church program only if they showed written permission from their parents. The church even snapped photographs of the children and their parents together. But a trial filled with violent threats by Muslim radicals sealed the women's convictions and signaled a fresh wave of persecution against Indonesia's Christian minority.

A Bandung court rejected the women's first appeal in November, and late last month the Constitutional Court refused to hear a legal challenge mounted by Ruyandi Hutasoit, pastor of Church of the Shining Christian in Jakarta. Lawyers for Hutasoit argued that the Child Protection Act violates Indonesia's constitution, which says citizens may practice the religion of their choice. The court ruled that Hutasoit could not contest the act because he had not experienced any "direct losses" under it. The court also indicated that the act was consistent with the constitution.

Though the legal losses were disheartening to the women who have already served eight months in jail since their arrests last year, Ann Buwalda of the Jubilee Campaign said they are "holding up quite well under the circumstances." Buwalda's Virginia-based religious freedom group has staff and contacts in Indonesia who regularly visit the women. They say the women are "quite brave" and seem to be treated well. But each is separated from family and children at home, and that is "the greatest hardship for them to bear," according to Buwalda.

Buwalda says her group has counted "upwards of 40 churches" that the government has forced to close since last summer. Compass Direct reported that local officials in Bandung, West Java, ordered eight house churches in a local housing complex to close as of Jan. 15, charging that the churches do not have permits to meet in private homes. Church leaders say they have applied for permits, but that their applications have been repeatedly rejected.

Buwalda says the church closings are part of a wider campaign of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), a government-sponsored organization of Muslim clerics who oppose Muslim cooperation with non-Muslims. Buwalda says MUI leaders use threats to stir neighborhood opposition to churches that have existed for decades. Without support from Muslim neighbors, Christian churches can't meet in private homes. "It's their mode of operation, and it's working," she says.

Though most church closings have been concentrated in West Java, the government may soon set its sights on Jakarta, the bustling capital city that has dozens of new church groups. Most churches meet in rented rooms at hotels and office buildings since "hostility towards the Christian minority makes it

simply impossible to build a church structure in Jakarta," according to Buwalda. She says Christians in Jakarta fear they will "be the next target after West Java is purged of its churches."

In the meantime, Christians in West Java are coping with the recent church closings in different ways. Some are meeting in smaller groups dispersed among several homes. Some have relocated to areas far away from most members' homes. Some are still undecided about where to meet. Church leader Yohanes Pangarso told Compass Direct that on Jan. 8 his church abandoned the home it had been meeting in since 1993. After a mob surrounded the home during a Sunday morning service, and a subsequent warning from local officials, "we decided we cannot use this house anymore," Pangarso said.

While some are going farther underground, a small group of churches has taken to "meeting in the middle of the streets on Sunday mornings," according to Buwalda. Churchgoers know it's "bold and risky," she says, but their protests tell the government: "If we can't have church in our homes, we'll have it somewhere."

INVESTIGATORS SUSPECT TWO "BUDDIES" AS 10TH CHURCH BURNS

(EP)—A Feb. 11 fire at a Baptist church in Alabama became the tenth in a string of church arsons in rural parts of the state.

The Saturday afternoon blaze at the Beaverton Freewill Baptist Church in northwest Alabama, near the Mississippi line, caused severe damage.

Investigators have said they don't know a motive, but continue to insist there is no racial pattern. Five of the churches, including the one in Beaverton, had white congregations and five black. All were Baptist, the dominant faith in the region, and mostly in isolated country settings.

The previous week, Morning Star Baptist, near Boligee, Ala., and three other rural Alabama churches were damaged or destroyed by fires on a single day, Feb. 7.

Rich Marianos, a spokesman for the federal Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives agency, said more than 50 agents were assigned to the investigation. "This is our No. 1 priority nationally," he said.

NATIONAL BRIEFS

(EP)—Ohio, Indiana and South Dakota are among the states whose lawmakers plan to introduce bills to either ban or severely limit abortions during this year's legislative sessions. South Dakota's bill goes the farthest. It would ban abortion but not prosecute doctors who perform one to save the life of the mother. Rep. Roger Hunt said with the confirmations of Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito to the U.S. Supreme Court, now is the right time to pursue such legislation. "There's likely to be another Supreme Court justice in the next two to three years," he said. "If this bill is enacted and signed by the governor, it may very well be attacked in the federal court system."

(EP)—Cable news giant CNN made a \$100,000 donation to the National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association (NLGJA), an endowment to support the Leroy R. Aarons Scholarship Award, the NLGJA Web site reported. According to NLGJA, the scholarship fund will give \$5,000 a year to a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) college student who plans a career in journalism and "is committed to furthering NLGJA's mission of fair and accurate coverage of the LGBT community" -- which clearly would mean writing stories with a pro-gay bias. Jim Walton, president of CNN Worldwide, said his company is investing in its future. "This donation helps ensure that we not only support an outstanding organization of journalists," he said, "but a deep resource for hiring future CNN anchors, correspondents and producers." Gary Schneeberger, director of media and constituent communications for Focus on the Family Action and a secular newspaper reporter and editor for more than a decade, said an objective news organization has no business giving money to an activist organization like the NLGJA. "This group exists for one reason and one reason only -- to advance a pro-homosexual agenda disguised as journalism through the news media," Schneeberger said.—*CitizenLink*

(EP)—The Ohio Board of Education voted 11-4 on Feb. 14 to eliminate a science lesson that encourages students to seek evidence for and against evolution. Critics had called the material an opening to teach intelligent design, which holds that life is so complex it must have been created by a higher authority. The lesson, originally adopted in 2002, said students should be able to "describe how scientists continue to investigate and critically analyze aspects of evolutionary theory." The standards included a disclaimer that they do not require the teaching of intelligent design. The board vote represents the latest setback for the intelligent design movement. In December, a federal judge barred the school system in Dover, Pa., from teaching intelligent design alongside evolution in high school biology classes. The judge said that intelligent design is religion masquerading as science, and that teaching it alongside evolution violates the separation of church and state.

(EP)—A federal court in Florida has ruled that the state's parental-notification law will stand, despite the abortion industry's claim it's unconstitutional. U.S. District Court Judge William Stafford found the claim by Planned Parenthood of Southwest and Central Florida, along with three other abortion clinics, to be unfounded. "Florida has carefully crafted a parental notification statute that serves a compelling state interest," he said.

(EP)—Hundreds of churches nationwide celebrated the birth of Charles Darwin on Feb. 12 by discussing his contributions to science and their relationship to religion, The New York Times reported. In 2005, a group

of academics and ministers in Wisconsin began the Clergy Letter Project as a way to influence public schools to shy away from offering science curriculum that challenged the theory of evolution. The organizers of the Clergy Letter Project are among those who have organized Evolution Sunday.

(EP)—The state pharmacy board ordered Wal-Mart on Feb. 14 to stock emergency contraception pills at its stores in Massachusetts. Massachusetts becomes second state to require the world's largest retailer to carry the morning-after pill. A Wal-Mart spokesman said the company would comply with the directive by the Massachusetts Board of Pharmacy and is reviewing its nationwide policy on the drug. Wal-Mart now carries the pill only in Illinois, where it is required to do so under state law. The company has said it "chooses not to carry many products for business reasons," but has refused to elaborate. The unanimous decision by the pharmacy board comes two weeks after three women, backed by pro-abortion groups, sued Bentonville, Ark.-based Wal-Mart for failing to carry the drug in its 44 Wal-Marts and four Sam's Club stores in Massachusetts. The women had argued that state policy requires pharmacies to provide all "commonly prescribed medicines."



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, Kansas is in search of a pastor.

Interested persons should reply to Bro. Gale Wyckoff at (620) 845-6624, or email him at pm67022@kanokla.net, or Bro. Eddie Roberts at (620) 845-2164 or email roberts@kanokla.net, or Bro. Clint Whaley at (620)845-2493, or email clintwhaley@kanokla.net.

The area Fellowship will be with the Berea Baptist Church in Mantachie, MS on March 25th. Service will begin at 10:00 a.m. All are invited to attend. A noon meal will be provided by the church.

The Grace Baptist Church, Fairmount, GA is in need of a sound Sovereign Grace Baptist pastor.

Their former pastor of 35 years recently went home to be with the Lord.

Any interested elder should call Jack Gregory at (770) 796-2354.



Teaching Ministry

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reading this today, you know what I am referring to. You recall the day the Spirit by the preaching of the word convicted you of your sins. You remember how you mourned over your sins which crucified the Lord of glory. You will never forget when you leaned upon Jesus Christ as your only Savior. How you rejoiced with joy unspeakable, when you saw by the Spirit's help, that Christ died for your sins and rose for your justification. "Oh, happy day that fixed my choice on Thee, my Savior and my God!"

The only way any sinner can know God savingly is by a Divine revelation. My Lord said: **"No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him"** (Matt. 11:27). This verse makes known how man's salvation is solely dependant upon the will of Christ--not the supposed free-will of the alien sinner. When Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ, our Lord ascribed this knowledge to the Father's revelation.

Multitudes of preachers are trying to do the Holy Spirit's work for Him. They are usurping His office. Evangelists are trying to open the dead sinner's eyes by psychology and tricky invitations to join the church. But it is the Holy Spirit's work to show the sinner that he is utterly lost, undone, helpless, hopeless and guilty before God. We are completely dependant upon the Spirit in all of our evangelistic work. Without Him we can do nothing, but beat the air.

The Spirit teaches by quickening the understanding. Isaiah 11:2-3 discloses how the Spirit of the Lord shall make Christ of quick understanding in the Kingdom Age. It is the Spirit that makes us quick to understand the mind and will of God.

According to I Corinthians 2:13 the Holy Spirit teaches by comparing spiritual things with spiritual. He expounds spiritual things to those who are spiritual. Spirit-taught men alone can comprehend spiritual truths. The Spirit helps us to compare the spiritual things of the Old Testament with the spiritual things of the New Testament. The Spirit can teach carnal Christians very little because spiritual things are spiritually discerned.

The Holy One teaches by revealing hidden things. I read in Luke 2:26 these words: **"And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ."** I learn from these words that the Spirit reveals hidden truths to those who wait upon Him. He will reveal the hidden meaning of isolated Scriptures if we will study long enough.

The Spirit of the Lord teaches by

hindering selfish things. Paul and Silas were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia. It is written in Acts 16:6: **"Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the regions of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia."** Paul and Silas planned to go to Bithynia, **"but the Spirit suffered them not;"** that is, He overruled their minds. We, like them, must always follow the leadership of the Spirit in providential matters. We ought always to be under the check and conduct of the Spirit for His ways are best.

It is one thing to form plans, and then ask the Spirit's guidance; it is quite another thing to trust Him to form the plans. The hindrances of the Spirit are but part of His helps or teaching ministry. Let us heed the words of Psalms 37:5: **"Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."** Solomon said: **"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."**

THE ATTITUDES OF THE TAUGHT

The Spirit teaches while we obey. This is seen in Acts 8:26: **"And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert."** Verse 29 says: **"Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go."** The Spirit called Philip while he was engaged in the great Samaritan revival. He was in the way of obedience to the Lord when the Spirit taught him what he must do. The disobedient need not to expect the special ministry of the Spirit.

The Spirit teaches us while we meditate. Acts 10:19 declares: **"While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee."** We learn from this that those who would be taught of the Spirit must think upon spiritual things. While Peter was thinking upon the Divine things, the Spirit instructed him. Since the Spirit teaches while we meditate, it behoves us to meditate more often and for longer periods of time. When we are exposed to those things which are true, honest and of good report, let us think upon them.

The blessed Spirit teaches while we serve. In Acts 13:2 I read: **"As they (the church at Antioch) ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."** Those taught here were busy serving the Lord in church. This class of people is easy to be taught of the Spirit for Christ said: **"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself"** (John 7:17).

How wonderful! How much more successful would church officials be if the entire church could be led by the Spirit

in its selections. How the Lord would be honored if each church had the pastor whom the Holy Spirit had appointed overseer! How much more pleasing to God would missionaries be if they were called of the Holy Spirit instead of some mission board or group of preachers! Before a church selects a pastor or sends out a missionary or chooses a teacher or an official, let her do like the Jerusalem church. Let her pray to God and say: **"Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen"** (Acts 1:24). Then we can say like the Jerusalem church: **"For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us..."** (Acts 15:28).

The Holy Spirit teaches while we wait. This truth is seen in Luke 2:26. There

we are told Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel when the Holy Spirit revealed Christ to him. We need many like Simeon in our churches who will wait on the Lord. If the blessing tarries, let us wait for it like Simeon did. If the promise has been believed, the answer will surely come.

The Spirit teaches while we listen. I read in Revelation 2:7: **"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."** The Spirit teaches those to whom the Lord hath given a seeing eye and a hearing ear. May this be the day when the Spirit will show you your lost condition, and then reveal Christ to you as Savior. May the words that I have spoken become Spirit and life unto you that hear.



The Coming Again

By Willis Lord

"Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin, unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

*"On His shoulder He shall bear
Power and majesty; and wear
On His vesture and His thigh,
Names most awful, names most high.*

*Wonderful in counsel He;
Christ, the Incarnate Deity;
Sire of Ages, ne'er to cease,
King of Kings, and Prince of Peace."*

The great Hope set before men in the New Testament is the coming again of the Messiah; or, using the Greek form of the word--The Christ. The two words are one in meaning, and denote in the Scriptures the same person. The Messiah of the law and the prophets is the Jesus Christ of the evangelists and the apostles. Paul, therefore, upon his conversion, preached Jesus, that He is the Son of God; that the Messiah must needs die and rise again; and that Jesus is He. So far as the person is concerned, all that the Old Testament made known as to the then coming One has its realization in Him Who was born in Bethlehem of Judea. Having sanctified infancy and childhood by being Himself an infant and a child; having then been inaugurated in His public office and work as the Messiah, by the descent upon Him of the Spirit as a dove at the Jordan, and by the voice from the heavenly glory, saying, **"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him"** having also overcome in that dire temptation, to which as the second Adam, He was subjected at the outset of His course; having, moreover, shed the true light upon men by means of His simple yet marvelous teachings of grace and truth, and set before them the one perfect example of a perfect life; having likewise, through the Eternal Spirit,

offered Himself on Calvary without spot unto God, the appointed sacrifice for the sins of men, and come forth alive again from the grave where weeping love laid Him, He ascended from the Mount of Olives, in divine array, to the glorious high throne of the Father. From thence He now exercises, invisibly to us, supreme and universal dominion; for **"The LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."** His next great Messianic manifestation is to be His return from that throne to this world, in glory and for judgment.

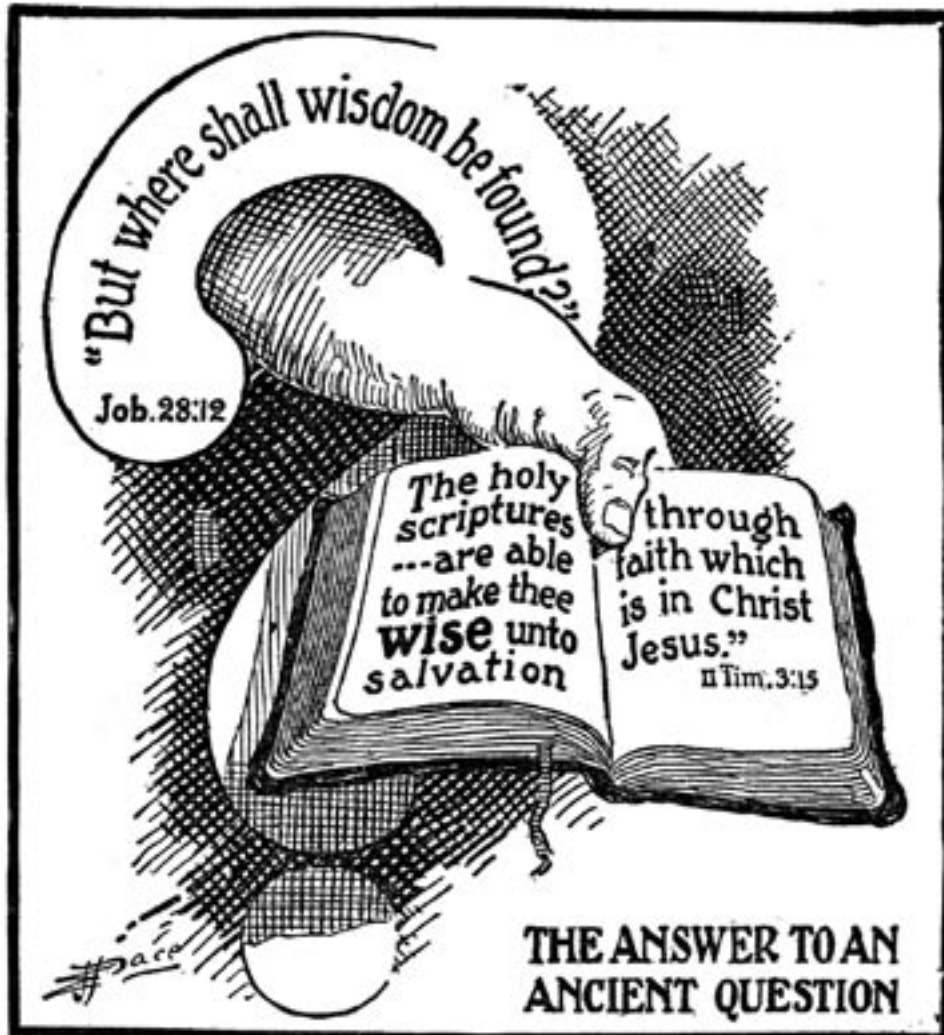
ANCIENT INTIMATIONS

In the visions of the prophets, as already noted, the great events connected with the Messiah appeared to be grouped, having their place or time near together. Those which were the most remote crowded close upon those which were nearest. It is certain, however, that the saintly ones of the former dispensations were not without the essential truth. All the great characteristics of the two comings they had in clear view; they did not have the true and full perspective. They saw the sufferings and they saw the glory; they did not see the momentous and prolonged interval between them. They had the precious substance of the truth, without its chronology; we have the chronology and the substance. It cannot be without interest or spiritual use to mark how from the beginning the second coming of the Messiah has been an essential part of the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Like a line of living light, it has shone across the ages.

BEFORE THE FLOOD

Go back to Eden. While Adam and Eve yet linger there, note that germinal promise. "He shall bruise thy head," said the Lord God to the serpent; *i.e.*, in the dread conflict now begun He shall subject

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thee to utter and endless overthrow. The Lord has come once on the wings of love, and returned again to His Father's side; but this conflict is still in progress; this victory is yet in the womb of the future. The battle will be ended and the victory forever won only when the Lord shall again come in robes of judgment (Gen. 3:15).

Hearken also to Enoch, the seventh from Adam. What startling words he pours forth on the ears of his generation. "Behold," he cries, "the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment on all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." This was not fulfilled by the flood. The Lord did not then come with myriads of his saints. Nor was it fulfilled by the birth of Bethlehem. Rejoicing angels were indeed there, but the Lord did not then come in judgment. He came to seek and to save the lost. The eye of Enoch was fixed upon the second coming: "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance." So "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James," certifies; and he therefore makes use of this prophecy to admonish all the ungodly now, "who turn the grace of God

into lasciviousness, and deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

TO THE PATRIARCHS

Come down the interval from Enoch to Abraham. Time and again he heard the voice of Jehovah, addressing to him words of counsel or of promise. Time and again he saw the Angel of Jehovah, in visible form and act. On some occasion, when or how is not revealed, he also saw the day of Christ. Our most gracious Saviour affirms it. What day of Christ? Perhaps the words were meant to cover the whole period bounded by the two comings. It is observable, however, that in the usage of the New Testament the day of Christ denotes, not the day of His weakness, but of His power; not the day of His sorrow, but of His joy; not the day of His deep suffering and shame, when men mocked at Him, but of His glorious manifestation, when they will cry, "Crown Him!" And most certain it seems that the vision of the patriarch embraced that still future time when this vast promise shall reach its fulfillment: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast heard my voice" (I Cor. 1:9; Phil. 1:10; Gen. 22:18).

From Beersheba cross the desert into Egypt. The aged Jacob is there, not only to see and be cared for by his long-mourned Joseph, but, also, in the purpose of God, to die. The mortal hour is visibly at hand. His sons gather at his couch. What gleams from above lighten that home in Goshen, and turn the death-scene into one of glory. What an

apocalypse of things to come touching the tribes of Israel; and especially touching the promised seed! The scepter and the law, he cries, will linger in Judah until Shiloh comes. This was fulfilled at the incarnation. But centuries beyond this pass before the dying seer. Far down the track of time he sees the Redeemer--not crucified, but enthroned by the nations. This world-wide obedience; this reverent and adoring homage are yet in the future.

IN THE PSALMS

Listen also to David, the son of Jesse--the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob and the sweet Psalmist of Israel. Looking on Calvary, and personating the Messiah, hear him cry: "The dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture" (Ps. 22:16-18).

Behold, however, another scene: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Ps. 2: 1-9).

And when this work of judgment is past, Behold the King! "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: Yea, all kings shall fall down before him. All nations shall serve him" (Ps. 72:9-11). "His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call Him blessed" (Ps. 72:17).

THROUGHOUT THE PROPHETS

Where can we find grander themes or sublimer strains than in the writings of those extraordinary men the Hebrew prophets? Nay, in all literature besides, where are their equals for thoughts that breathe and words that burn? Not fable, not fiction, not the things which are seen and temporal, engage and engross them. Their sphere of mental sight and

foresight is within the real; the moral and spiritual; the eternal. They tell of truth and righteousness; of sin and judgment; of the divine counsels and acts; of the everlasting verities. Consult their pages with reference especially to the coming One. What surpassing scenes! What contrasts of character and condition! What intermingling of lights and shades! Here what gloom! There what glory!

ISAIAH

Turn to Isaiah the son of Amoz; whose lips one of the cherubim touched with the living coal from off the altar.

He set forth the humiliation of the Messiah, with the fullness and vividness almost of the Gospels. He saw Him as a child born; as a tender plant out of dry ground, without form or comeliness; His visage was so marred more than any man; and His form more than the sons of men. He saw Him despised and rejected by those whom He came to save; a man of sorrows and familiar with grief; wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; bearing thus that mountain-like burden which Jehovah laid upon Him. He saw Him taken from prison and from judgment; brought as a lamb to the slaughter; cut off out of the land of the living, and having His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death. All this passed before the vision of the prophet; and all this became history at the first coming.

But, note now another scene. Blending with this picture, or gleaming across its background, what a strange contrast. The just now oppressed and slain One, becomes a mighty King. He puts on righteousness as a breast-plate and an helmet of salvation upon His head. He is glorious in His apparel and travels in the greatness of His strength. He treads the wine-press alone, and of the people there are none with Him. He treads them in His anger, and tramples them in His fury, and their blood is sprinkled upon all His raiment. The day of vengeance is in His heart, and the year of His redeemed is come. Out of Zion goes forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. The mountain of the Lord's house is established in the top of the mountains, and exalted among the hills, and all the nations flow unto it. The moon is confounded and the sun is ashamed when the Lord of Hosts reigns in mount Zion, and before His ancients gloriously. Can there be a doubt that all this is to be realized at the second coming? (Isa. 53:1-9; 32:1; 59:17; 63:1-4; 2:2, 3; 24:23).

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah was the prophet of sorrow. His heart was broken within him, and his eyes ran down with tears because of the sins of his people, and the fearful desolation about to overwhelm them. His prophecies resound with no exulting joy in view of the first coming of the Messiah. He glances indeed at that scene

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in Ramah, and weeps aloud with Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because each was not (Jer. 31:15); and then his vision sweeps down those long centuries, still in progress, of the dispersion and affliction of Israel and Judah. Were there ever sights more sad and woeful? These centuries do, indeed, at length end; and the prophet sees and hails the Divine Restorer. His plaintive harp vibrates with a song of gladness. Hear it.

“Behold, the days come. saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, the LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, the LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all the countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land” (Jer. 23:5-8; 33:14-17).

Mark the terms of this prophecy. They point as with a sunbeam to the Messiah in the day of His regal power. The facts of history compel us to the future for its fulfillment. Is the Messiah now a King? So He is, but invisibly to men, and disowned and rejected by them. Was there a return from Babylon: So there was; but, at best, it was partial, and not to be compared with the exodus from Egypt, in numbers, or in the manifestations of Jehovah's grace and might. Did the Messiah come by incarnation at Bethlehem? So He did; but, then Judah was not saved, nor did Israel dwell safely. They were overshadowed and oppressed by the all-crushing power of Rome. The times of the Gentiles had begun their course. Through all the centuries since, Jerusalem has been trodden down of the Gentiles, and the Jews have been scattered over all the earth. It will continue to be so, both as to the Holy City, and the covenant land and people, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (Luke 21:24).

EZEKIEL

Among the captives in Babylon, by the river of Chebar, was Ezekiel, a priest, the son of Buzi. Though later in the prophetic office than Jeremiah, he was, like him, deeply moved by the sins and the doom of his people. His visions of God, unique in form and largely impressed by the scenes around him, embrace in their reach some of the vast things of the future. Plainly there fell upon his eye the light of the two comings. He saw the highest branch

of the highest cedar---a tender one---planted in the mountain of the height of Israel. He also saw the diadem taken from that profane and wicked prince, whose day was even then come, and after mighty overturnings, given to Him whose right it is. He saw, moreover, not only a restoration from Babylon, but the restoration of the outcasts of Israel, and of the dispersed of Judah, out of all the countries where they are scattered; when they shall no more be two nations, but one; and one king shall be to them all; and David shall be their king; and they shall walk in the statutes and judgments of the Lord their God, and do them; and He will make a covenant of peace with them, an everlasting covenant; and He will place them and multiply them, and set His sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore; and God will be their God, and they shall be His people; where also this great promise shall have its perfect fulfillment, **“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also I will give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”** Likewise, in the visions of God, the prophet saw that wonderful symbolic temple into which the glory of the Lord came, by the way of the gate toward the East, and the glory of the Lord filled it; and that equally wonderful symbolic city, whose name shall be Jehovah Shammah; The Lord is there! Where, either since or before the incarnation, has all this been realized? Does it not remain to bless and glorify the future? (Ezek. 17:22-24; 21:26; 37:22-28; 39:25; 43:4; 48:35).

DANIEL

When we turn to the man greatly beloved, illustrious as a statesman as well as a prophet, intimately conversant with secular as well as sacred affairs, we find most definite views of Messiah the Prince, both in His weakness and in His power. Daniel saw the Anointed, the Christ in His first coming. He saw Him at the very crisis of His passion; dying just when Israel would be expecting Him to reign; cut of by a death of violence, not, indeed, for Himself. His death was a substitution and an expiation. It made an end of sins for all who put their trust in Him. It brought in for their pardon and complete salvation a righteousness, in its value without limit, and in its duration without end. But from this astonishing scene on Calvary the eye of the prophet glanced far forward. It fixed with intent gaze on the most distant future as yet revealed. Already the throne of David was fallen down with the fall of Zedekiah; and it was to remain abased until the true Heir should come. Already had Ezekiel seen the glory of the Lord depart from the threshold of the temple, and from the midst of the city; and Jerusalem was

no more His dwelling place. The God of Heaven had turned to the Gentiles. He had given to Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom, power, strength and glory. He had appointed him as the head of those great world-powers, which should continue for ages, and which were symbolized, as to character and succession, by a huge metallic image, shown to the monarch of Babylon in a vision of the night. Gentile supremacy and the times of the Gentiles began with him. But lo! This colossal image, suddenly falls. A stone cut out of the mountain without hands---the stone of Israel, which the builders rejected---smites it, and destroys it. Not, however, let it be noted, at the first coming. That was the day of grace and truth, of divine sorrow and measureless love. The stone smites the image---not upon its head of gold; nor upon its breast and arms of silver; nor upon its belly and thighs of brass; nor upon its legs of iron; but upon its feet of iron and clay. It smites it therefore when the fourth kingdom symbolized in the image has reached its last form and been divided into ten kingdoms. In the days of these kingdoms, and as we now know, in their last days, will the stone that smites them, break them in pieces, take their place, filling the whole earth, and the God of Heaven set up a kingdom that shall be invincible and indestructible. Moreover, Daniel **“Behold till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as a burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.”** And then. . . **“Behold, one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before Him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”** This fatal smiting of the great image; this dread judgment before the Ancient of days, this glorious dominion of one like the Son of Man, still await historic realization. (Ezek. 10:18; 11:23; Dan. 9:24-26; 2:31-45; 7:13-14).

THE MINOR PROPHETS

In the minor prophets the essential facts are the same. Many a sacred ray shoots across their pages, revealing the Messiah at His first coming. They set forth His divine nature, and yet recognize Him as the Son of David. They tell how the nations will be yearning, consciously or unconsciously for His advent, because of the miseries which are

upon them. They point out where He will be born and within what period. They announce a messenger to go before Him to prepare His way; and that He himself will suddenly come to His temple. They foreshow His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver, and that field of blood bought with the accursed price. They affirm that the sword of Jehovah will smite Him, though He is Jehovah's fellow, and that His little ones will be scattered. But they pass on from the first advent to the second. They see Him as a Priest upon His throne, and bearing the glory; as standing and ruling in the majesty of the Lord God; as gathering all nations into the valley of Jehosaphat, and pleading with them there for His heritage; a roaring out of Zion, and uttering His voice from Jerusalem, and then, though the earth and the heavens shake, as being the hope and the strength of His people; as going forth to fight against the nations which encompass Jerusalem in array of battle; as standing, in that day, upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and which shall then cleave in the midst toward the east and toward the west; and they connect these stupendous transactions with that time when the Lord God shall come with all His holy ones. How certain is it, that these prophets revealed amazing events not yet in history? (Micah 5:2-4; Hag. 2:6-9; Zech. 6:9-13; 11:12-14; 13:7; 14:3-4; Mal. 3:1).

THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is not, however, until after the first coming, and we see in the clearer and fuller light of the New Testament, that we gain the completed view of the second coming. The New Testament has its living root, and its majestic trunk and branches in the Old. The Old Testament has its rich and divine flower and fruit in the New. They are not two separate trees of life from the heavenly Paradise; they are one and the same tree; planted, and from first to last cultured and vivified by the one eternal spirit of God. The Old Testament foretold the Messiah as to come, and shadowed forth the essential qualities of His person, character, office, work, and kingdom. In the New Testament the Messianic prophecy culminates in visible and marvelous history. We have the record of the coming, and of Him Who came. Where before there was only outline, or, at most, grouping without perspective, there are details, and the true relations and proportions, and clearer and fuller vision of the yet future. It is in this light, therefore, we reach the truth in its completeness, which, in its substance, was the heritage of the saints from the beginning.

SEEMING FAILURE

After a life of about thirty-three years among men, a life that has no parallel for its beneficence, and for its moral beauty and power---the Messiah, or Jesus Christ,

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was, by wicked hands, crucified and slain. What an astonishing event! Instead of honor, men covered Him with ignominy. Instead of power, He fell, apparently helpless, before His enemies. Instead of a world-wide scepter and a glorious throne, as the prophets sung, He went suddenly to the grave, and the grave of one charged with crime. What wonder if the Scribes and Pharisees exulted over His death, and thought that was the end of Him. What wonder if His little band of disciples was utterly cast down. Certainly, there was this obvious alternative; either the long series of prophecies which went before on the Messiah had largely failed, or He must come again. An intelligent faith would embrace the latter conclusion. To such a faith, that which had taken place, so exact and amazing, would render most certain, the complete fulfillment of that which remained. As He had come and endured all the suffering, sooner or later the glory must follow.

DIVINE SOLUTION

Our blessed Lord gave intimations of this truth at an early period of His ministry. From time to time afterward, as the disciples were able to bear it, He made it known to them plainly. **"Nevertheless,"** He said, **"When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"** but the Son of Man was then with them. His words, therefore, implied that He was to go away, and come again. Again He said, **"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory"** (Matt. 25:31). The Son of Man was there and then present, but in a most humble condition. His words therefore teach that He would come again and be known and seen in His power and glory as a king. And so again: **"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works"** (Matt. 16:27). And still again: **"In the regeneration,"** i.e., in the new world which is to be, **"When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"** (Matt. 19:28). Before the death of our Lord, every doubt as to this matter was dissipated, and the disciples were looking forward to the second coming. When, therefore, a few days before His passion, He sat on the Mount of Olives with the forsaken and doomed Jerusalem in view, they came to Him with the question: **"What shall be the sign of thy coming; and of the end of the world?"** In reply, He uttered that momentous prophecy, which still stands as a beacon light to the Church and the world, and in which He again declared, **"Then shall appear the sign of the Son**

of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:3-10).

RESULT

It is plain from all this that there is to be a second coming of the Lord, and that this will fill up all the foreshowing of prophecy as to His kingly character and dominion, just as His first coming has filled up all the foreshowing of prophecy as to His being a servant and a sacrifice. In the divine order the cross was to be first; and then, and because of it, the crown. This order was a necessity. **"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, He said, "and to enter into His glory?"** and the heart of those sad ones on the way to Emmaus burned within them as they heard Him. And so again, on the evening of the Resurrection day, He said to the eleven as they were gathered together: **"These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day."** See those eager disciples! How their souls catch on fire at the words: **"Rise from the dead the third day!"** Surely it will be to reign! He will then come in His glory! He will then, by great acts of power and judgment, overwhelm those who just now rejected and crucified Him, and establish, visibly, His mighty kingdom! No, ye loving and adoring ones. The time is not yet. I have died, and I have come back from the dead, not now to appear in My glory, but that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in My name among all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem!" There must be an interval of patience and mercy. There must be the offer everywhere of the blood-bought salvation. There must be the breaking down of the middle wall of partition which has stood between the Jews and Gentiles for so many ages. There must be the blessed ministrations of the Almighty Spirit, to effect upon men of all races and all climes, the gracious purposes of God in His redeeming Son. There must be the gathering, along successive generations, of that great multitude which no man can number, out of all nations and kindreds, and peoples and tongues, to stand, at length, as conquerors, robed and crowned, before the throne of God and of the Lamb!

UNTIL HE COME

Without doubt it was a difficult thing for the disciples to adjust their feelings to this fuller revelation. Their love to the person of the Saviour had become most tender and strong, how could they

then bear that He should go away from them and remain? In their most sacred beliefs and hopes until now they had held the suffering and the glory of the Messiah to be in close connection, how could they then without a struggle, give up these beliefs and hopes, and see the Name above all Names still contemned and dishonored among men? As the dreaded hour of separation drew nigh they instinctively shrank from it. On the night of the Last Supper sorrow filled their hearts. When at the table the divine Master said: **"This is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me,"** and also, **"This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins,"** who can conceive what thoughts and feelings swept through their souls! But in the darkness a light arises. If the blessed One ordains the Supper for a memorial, He also ordains it for a pledge and a prophecy. If it tells them of His sacrifice, it also tells them of His triumph. Along the coming time, it will indeed point back to Mount Calvary, but it will also point forward to Mount Zion. He made it, there and then, to herald the hope of the Church till He come! Then followed those wondrous discourses. Did mortals ever before listen to such thoughts and truths? Their beauty, spirit, power, must have made that upper room like Heaven. To cheer them in their sadness He said: **"I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."** **"He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."** To quicken their hope, and nerve them for the coming labor and conflict, He said: **"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."** Presently, they left that sacred chamber. They crossed over the brook Cedron. They went into Gethsemane, and some of them witnessed the agony there. On the morrow they saw Him hang in pain and death on the tree! but, those stirring words, **"I will come again!"** sounded on like a trumpet. In the Acts; in the Epistles; in the Apocalypse, they ring out, at every now and then, as a loud voice from Heaven, to rouse and urge onward the sacramental host; and when the Word of God closes, its last accents are the solemn cry of the Bridegroom, **"Surely I come quickly: Amen!:"** with the yearning response of the Bride, **"Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"**

*"The Church has waited long
Her absent Lord to see;
And still in loneliness she waits,
A friendless stranger she.
Age after age has gone,
Sun after sun has set,
And still in weeds of widowhood,
She weeps a mourner yet.*

*We long to hear Thy voice,
To see Thee, face to face,
To share Thy crown and glory then,
As now we share Thy grace.
Should not the loving Bride
The absent Bridegroom mourn?
Should she not wear the weeds of grief
Until her Lord return?*

*The whole creation groans
And waits to hear Thy voice,
That shall restore her comeliness
And make her wastes rejoice.
Come, Lord, and wipe away
The curse, the sin, and stain:
Come, make this blighted world of ours
Thine own fair world again!"*



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fault? Paul tells us in no uncertain terms that he himself was not a sinless person. He affirms that he was not yet perfect. And since he realized so well that he was not pure from every fault in regard to sin; therefore, we must look for this perfection elsewhere.

One of the most disgusting things we hear taught concerning the bride of Christ is that when a person is born again he or she just automatically becomes a part of it. Then there is another teaching somewhat similar to this one which says that all saved people who are baptized into a Baptist Church become a part of the bride. That is the teaching that I held to for many years. So far as I can recall, God spared me from ever believing in this monstrous thing called the universal church. Therefore, I have never believed in a universal bride. But for a long time I did believe that all born again Baptists were a part of that bride.

In later years, however, I have come to believe that not only did our Lord choose some from the masses of humanity to be saved, but that He chose some from among those who were to be saved to be His bride. A person does not have to be a part of the bride in order to be saved. That is plain universal nonsense. I am beginning to believe more and more that we do not have any more to do with our being a part of the bride than we do with our being born again. I hope to make myself clear on this point as we go along.

I believe we have this fact set forth at least typically in the Scriptures. In Mark 3:13-14 we read: **"And he goeth up into a**

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mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach. Here we see Christ calling WHOM HE WOULD. Then we see those whom He called coming to Him. Please note, it does not say that some of those whom He called came to Him. And then we see Him ordaining twelve from among those who came. Then in Matthew 17:1-2 we read: **“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.”** Here we see our Lord leaving the other apostles at the foot of the mountain as He takes these three men with Him apart. Our Lord loves every one of His elect people. There is not a single one of those whom He has elected unto salvation that He did not love even before they were ever born into this world. So He loves all of His people. But there are some of His people whom He loves more than He does others of them. There are some of His people whose fellowship He desires more than that of others. If that be not true, why did He leave the other apostles at the foot of the mountain and cause them to miss that glorious experience? I’m sure there was plenty of room on that high mountain for every one of them had He wanted them along.

Then we find another notable incident in Mark 14:32-33 where we read: **“And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And he taketh with Him Peter and James and John.”** Don’t tell me there was not room in that garden for the whole group. They had all been there together many times. Judas had been there with them so many times he did not have to hunt for our Lord when he was ready to betray Him. He knew exactly where to lead the soldiers. But, if you notice, this time our Lord leaves all of them at the gate of the garden except Peter, James and John. Now this reminds us of Song of Solomon 4:12 where we read: **“A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse.”** Yes, Peter, James and John in that garden while the others were outside speaks so clearly to me of our Lord’s bride enclosed in a garden.

But, beloved, there was absolutely nothing in these three brethren that would merit this special favor, no in no wise. It seems that every time Peter opened his mouth he “stuck his big foot in it.” And our Lord knew full well before He carried him up that mountain, or into that garden that he would deny Him three

times, and that with an oath. And James and John had, through their mother, tried to pull strings in order that they might have the highest place of honor in the kingdom. No, the difference was not in Peter, James and John, but rather it was in Him who made the difference.

Yes, our Lord says that His spouse, or His bride is a garden enclosed. And I am persuaded that the wall that encloses this garden is more impregnable than the wall that encloses the federal penitentiary. Someone may be saying, or at least wondering what this impregnable wall consists of. Beloved, I believe that wall is made up of the great and profound truths of God’s precious Word. Let us not think for one fleeting moment that every person in this vicinity who refuses to believe all the great truths this church stands for is a lost person. If we are not very careful we will find ourselves saying that every saved person in reach of this church should be a member of this church. But, beloved, I am fully persuaded that there are quite a few saved people in reach of this church who have no more business being a member of this church than Matthew, Bartholomew, Thomas and the rest of the apostles had on that high mountain that day or in the garden of Gethsemane that night in the long ago.

Yes, I am persuaded that our Lord not only chooses whom He wants in His bride from among His elect people, but He says to the others, “You stay here.” He does not say it audibly today as He did to the eight apostles at the gate of the garden of Gethsemane that night, but He says it, in essence, by His refusing to open up some one or more of His great truths to them. Let us not think for one moment that we came to see this truth, or that truth because we are smarter than some of the others of our Lord’s people. No matter how smart you are, beloved, you do not see these great truths until He opens them up to you.

There are many of our Lord’s saints who will rejoice in hearing you preach the great truths of God’s Word until you come to Scriptures like John 1:13: **“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,”** or John 5:21: **“The Son quickeneth whom He will,”** or Ephesians 1:4: **“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,”** or Acts 13:48b: **“As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”** There are some whom I believe are the Lord’s saints who will not come back to hear you if you so much as read those, and other related Scriptures. Then there are others who will continue to come until you begin to contend for this great truth. So, the truth concerning God’s sovereignty in the election, and in the salvation of the lost is the wall that keeps many of our Lord’s saints out of the garden in which

His bride is enclosed.

Then there are many of the saints who will rejoice greatly with you while you preach God’s sovereignty and election. They will literally eat it up, and almost eat you up. But when you begin to contend for church truths, and church authority, they begin to wish they had eaten you up. These people will “Amen” you to death almost while you read: **“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”** They will tell you that our Lord’s command to go is all the authority you need. And, to be sure, it would have been all the authority we would need had our Lord not modified His statement later on.

In Acts 1:4 He told His disciples to wait there in Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father. And, according to John 14:16, this promise of the Father was the Holy Spirit. Then in Acts 1:8 we read: **“Ye shall receive power after that (when) the Holy Ghost is come upon you.”**

So the Holy Spirit came and gave this authority or power to act, directly to the church at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. But that has never been repeated. Those who tell you today that they received their authority directly from the Holy Spirit are running without their having been sent. The Holy Spirit gives this authority indirectly today through the churches. In Acts 13:2 the Holy Spirit told the church at Antioch to separate Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto He had called them. Here in this precious Scripture (and it is precious because it tells us in no uncertain terms just how we are to carry on our Lord’s work, whether it be missions or any other kind of work) we see two great truths taught. The first is that the Holy Spirit does the calling of the ones who are to do a special work for the Lord, whether it be to preach the Word at home or abroad. The other is that when the Holy Spirit has called a man, or men for a special work, the church is to clothe them with proper authority and send them to the work whereunto the Lord has called them.

Then there are others who will rejoice with you in the preaching of God’s sovereignty and election, and in the preaching and practicing of church truth and church authority, but when you refuse to invite Grandpa and Uncle Joe to partake of the Lord’s Supper with you, they have had it. Still there are those who will help you preach and teach close communion, but when you refuse to serve crackers and grape juice, they begin to look for a church that has a menu more to their liking.

Then there are those who want no part with you because you refuse to accept those wonderful people who have Campbellite baptism. They will say I think we should be satisfied with their

baptism if they are. They do not stop to think that our Lord is the one who is to be satisfied. And since He walked some sixty miles in order to receive Baptist baptism, we should not accept anything less. So if our Lord says to someone, “You stay here,” that is, outside the enclosed garden, we had better leave them there, unless we are hankering for some good old honest to goodness heart-ache and misery.

Now you may differ with me when I say that I am persuaded that there are some of our Lord’s born-again, blood-bought saints who just simply cannot be a part of your church if you contend for the truth of the eternal security of the saints. Scriptures like **“I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish”** or **“Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,”** and a lot of others on the subject mean absolutely nothing to them. And until our Lord opens up these Scriptures to these people, this great truth will continue to be a wall to keep them out of His enclosed garden.

Then, if there is any one truth in the Bible that keeps more of our Lord’s people out of His enclosed garden than any other, yea, possibly more than all the others put together, it is that found in I Corinthians 14:34: **“Let your women keep silence in the churches.”** If you contend for that truth you are not just a fanatic, you are an enemy to the Lord’s work in the eyes of the great majority of the Lord’s people. The arguments set forth by the Lord’s own people against this Scripture are not only pathetic, they actually border on fantasy.

When I stop to think of the wonderful women, not only in my own church, but in many of yours, whose zeal and love for our Lord, and for His precious church puts so many of us to shame. I will have to admit that if I had been the one to write this Bible, I would have left that verse out. And I believe Paul would have done the same thing had it been left up to him.

I have heard Baptists whom I have reason to believe were born-again Baptists who, in their desperation concerning this Scripture, say that Paul, being an old bachelor, just naturally had it in for the women. Saying a thing like that is not only pathetic, it is dangerous. But the Lord’s people do dangerous things sometimes. If you say that Paul wrote this statement because he had it in for the women, you should not argue with the Catholic when he says that John 3:16 is probably the reflections of the evangelist. Yes, those who deny the inspiration of I Corinthians 14:34 should give others the privilege of denying the inspiration of any other teaching they do not like, or agree with.

But probably the most popular argument against this truth is that found in the glorious training course books

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Wall that Encloses Sheep That Shall

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(?) of the Southern Convention, that is, they were having trouble in the church at Corinth and Paul told the women of that church to keep quiet until they got the trouble settled. It seems that the one who started this rumor overlooked a major and all important factor concerning this Scripture. If he had studied his English grammar just a little more he would have been able to see that the word "churches" is plural, and, therefore, it could not possibly be speaking of just this one church. One translation I have says, "Thus I likewise teach in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silence in the churches." Another translation I have says, "As in all congregations of God's people, women should not address the meeting." But when Baptists want to disbelieve something they see in the Bible, they do not have to have too much help.

I once thought that when a person was born again and was indwelt by the Holy Spirit he was capable of understanding any and all Bible doctrines. But, as of this moment, I am convinced that though a person is saved, and though he has the Holy Spirit abiding in Him for ever, he must still have the Scriptures opened up to him. And I further believe that our Lord by refusing to open up some of the Scriptures to the majority of His people, keeps them at the foot of the mountain, or at the gate of the garden while His chosen bride goes all the way with Him to the top of the mountain apart, or into the garden enclosed.

Then to sum it all up, I believe that in order for a person to be a part of the bride of Christ he, or she, must be a member of a sound, New Testament, Baptist Church. And, furthermore, that person must embrace every doctrine that is taught in the Bible. If every one included in the bride does not embrace all the doctrines taught in the Bible, the bride will be divided and, therefore, she cannot be a chaste virgin, that is, pure from every fault.

Some have asked, "What about the new converts who have not been taught all these doctrines when the rapture comes?" All I can say is that our Lord will take good care of that situation. Who knows that some of those new converts will be a part of the bride? He formulated His plans concerning His bride long ago, and those plans will be carried out to the tenth degree. So let us say amen to it.

We know this bride cannot be pure from every fault in the sense that she is sinlessly perfect. Therefore, the only way she can be pure from every fault would be in regard to the teaching of the blessed Bridegroom.



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improve upon eternity with the Lord Jesus Christ? And so shall we ever be with the Lord Paul told the church at Thessalonica. When time is no more, when the heavens and the earth pass away, we shall be forever with the Lord, always in His holy and eternal presence.

D. This Eternal Life is a Gift: "And I Give Unto Them"

John 10:28 says: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Christ gives eternal life to His elect. It's not something they earn or work for. Man's nature is to try to please God by doing this or that, to earn acceptance with Him, not so a thousand times. If you are going to be saved, you will have to receive the gift of eternal life. Romans 6:23 tells us: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Titus 3:5 declares: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Eternal life is a gift, not to be worked for, but received, because God is a merciful God. This eternal life is found only in a person, our Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12 says: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." There is no eternal life in the preacher, the baptismal pool, the ordinances or anything else, but in Christ!

III. THE SECURITY OF THE LORD'S SHEEP

John 10:27-28 says: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Christ says that He gives unto His sheep eternal life, and He means exactly that. If we can't believe our Savior on this truth, how can we believe Him on any other? Beloved, all the promises of God are yea, and yea, in Christ Jesus. Let God be true and every man a liar!

A. The Savior's Promise: They Shall Never Perish

What if they wander away? But what if they backslide? But what if they grow cold and indifferent? But what if they fall into sin? THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH, is our Savior's promise. Every one of God's sheep will be preserved unto the end. Jude 1, 24 says: "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding

joy." God's sheep can do a lot of things, but one thing they will not do is perish! God's sheep may be tempted, tried, fall, grow weary, become discouraged, deny their Lord, fall into sin, but they shall never perish. Why? Philippians 1:6 states: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." They may get down, but they shall never be utterly cast down, for their Lord upholdeth them with His hand. II Timothy 1:12 says: "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." They may not always live up to their commitment, but rest assured, God will live up to His.


B. The Father's Promise: They Shall Never Perish

John 10:28-29 states: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Many shall pluck at them, but none shall ever pluck them out of the Father's hand. Old Satan shall give many a hard pluck to get them out of the Father's hand, but his effort is futile. For those that deny this precious truth, I ask a question. Is any one stronger than God or Christ? Since God preserves this whole world and keeps it, can He not also keep that which cost Him the blood of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ! The sheep are in the hand of their precious Savior, and then the Father puts His hand over the Son's, that's SECURITY! Our text said that our Father is greater than all! Greater than all their troubles. Greater than all the demons in the underworld. Greater than all their sins. Greater than all their trials and tribulations. Paul summed it up in Romans 8:35-39. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8 begins with no condemnation and ends with no separation. There will never be anything past, present, or future that can separate God's elect from their great Shepherd. Greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world! In closing let me say praise God that there are some SHEEP THAT SHALL NEVER

PERISH! God ordained it that way, praise God! Oh, how this precious truth ought to humble us down at the Savior's feet in adoration and praise. We ought to use this precious truth to be faithful in His loving service, not to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Sinner friend, have you received this gift of eternal life from the Savior? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Then show your loving gratitude by becoming a member of His kind of church. May God grant it for Christ's sake is my prayer, Amen.



The Rock of Refuge



"An hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest"
Isaiah 32:2

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress; .. my buckler, .. and my high tower"
Psalms 18:2

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

Beginning Balance	\$6,226.39
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
.....	375.00
TOTAL	6,601.39
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	410.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	410.00
.....	\$6,191.39
Interest	+1.29
ENDING BALANCE	\$6,192.68

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$1,811.52
RECEIPTS:	
TOTAL	1,811.52
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT	160.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,651.52

Sheep That Shall Never Perish

By Steve Cornett
of Brownsburg, Indiana

“Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one” (John 10:25-30).

Of all the doctrines found in the Word of God, one of the most hated is the security of the believer. Many that don’t understand this precious truth, say this about us, “You believe once in grace always in grace” or “once saved always saved.” Beloved, can it be any other way? Isn’t salvation of the Lord? Sovereign Grace Baptists do not believe, and have never believed, that one can be saved today and lost tomorrow. The security of the believer does not rest upon anything that man is, or anything that man can do. The security of the believer rests fully upon the finished work of Jesus Christ alone. **“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ”** (I Cor. 3:11). To try and lay another foundation other than Christ Jesus is to undermine the perfect work of our precious Savior.

Some say that preaching eternal security leads to licentious living. Just because ungodly sinners seek to hide their ungodly lifestyle under the cloak of this great doctrine doesn’t nullify it. When a man takes a rope and hangs himself, you don’t blame the rope because he misused it, do you? Those that use grace as a license to sin know nothing about God’s grace. The doctrine of eternal security isn’t a license to sin, but strength to the believer to persevere in the things of God, and practice holiness in the fear of the Lord. This doctrine is for the edification of God’s elect, and encouragement for lost sinners under conviction. John 6:37 says: **“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”** John 6:40 says: **“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”**

I. GOD DESCRIBES HIS PEOPLE “MY SHEEP”

A. Described by Specialty of Possession
The word “sheep” is used forty eight

times in the New Testament, and it is always used as a metaphor to describe God’s elect. Not all men are God’s sheep, only those that were given to the Son by the Father. John 17:2 declares: **“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”** Only those chosen of the Father and given to the Son are His sheep. There are other metaphors used in God’s Word, foxes, dogs, goats, and pigs. These are used to describe the non-elect, and they have never been God’s sheep. His sheep are those whom the Father chose and the Son redeemed by His precious blood. John 10:15 says: **“As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the sheep: and I lay down my life for the sheep.”** Our Savior did not lay down His life or shed His precious blood for the goats, but only for the sheep!

B. Described by Specialty of Character

Not only are they chosen of the Father and redeemed by the Son, but their character is that of a sheep. They are dependent upon their precious Savior. John 15:5 says: **“I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”** Oh, how that ought to humble us down at our Savior’s feet! Sheep are humble and teachable. John 16:13 says: **“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”** The blessed Holy Spirit guides and teaches His sheep the great truths of God’s Word. Are you humble, and willing to be taught God’s Word?

C. Described by Their Attentiveness

“My sheep hear my voice.” God has given them the hearing ear, to hear their Shepherds voice. They heard His voice in the effectual call of salvation. John

5:24-25 says: **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.”** They heard the gospel in power and not in word only.

Has there been a time in your life when you were quickened by the Holy Spirit of God and you effectually heard the gospel of your salvation? God’s sheep continue to hear their Shepherd’s voice as they journey toward Heaven to be forever with their Lord. Psalm 85:8 says: **“I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.”** The Lord’s sheep hear God’s Word and it is spiritual food for their souls.

D. Described by Their Obedience

“My sheep hear my voice and they FOLLOW me!” God’s sheep are marked in the foot as well as the ear. The ear mark and the foot mark MUST be in every one of God’s sheep. They are not ashamed to take up their cross and follow Him. They followed Him in the effectual call for salvation. They followed Him in baptism and became a member of His church. Acts 2:41 says: **“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”** I am greatly concerned about those that say they are saved and don’t follow Him in baptism, or become a member of His church. Matthew 5:14-16 says: **“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”** What better way for their lights to shine than in the Lord’s church? **“I was glad when they said unto me, Let**

us go into the house of the Lord.” God’s sheep put their foot down in the path of obedience their Savior left for them. Are you following the Shepherd’s voice? Do you love what He loves, and hate what He hates? If so, you are His sheep.

II. THE PRIVILEGE’S CONFERRED UPON GOD’S SHEEP

A. The Shepherd’s Intimate Knowledge of Them

Their Savior knows them in a special and intimate way. **“I know them.”** John 10:3 says: **“To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.”** Saved friends, did you know that God knew you before you ever knew Him? He knows every one of His by name, because He wrote their names down in the Lamb’s Book of Life before the foundation of the world (Rev. 17:8). This intimate foreknowledge is not based upon their response to Him, but His own sovereign will and purpose. There never has been a time when He did not know them. II Timothy 2:19 says: **“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”** A goat may be named among them and get into the visible fold, but our Lord never knew them in the special way that He knows His sheep (Matt. 7:23). He told Jeremiah that He knew him before he was formed in his mother’s womb. Jeremiah 1:5 says: **“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”** How precious it is to be known by the great Shepherd. Is not such intimate knowledge worthy of our complete obedience? Yes, a thousand times. God help us to trust and obey His will in such a way that He will be honored and glorified.

C. The Quality of Life They Have: Eternal Life

It’s called eternal life, because God is eternal. John 3:16 says: **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”** John 3:36 says: **“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”** John 5:24 says: **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”** All men will live forever, but only the elect will live eternally with God. Beloved, isn’t it hard for us to comprehend eternal life? How long is eternal life? It’s forever and ever and forever! It’s life without an end. Talk about the quality of life, can one

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