

# The Berea Baptist Banner

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

## The Blind Beggar

By Tom Ross  
of South Point, Ohio

**"And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging"** (Mark 10:46).

The account of Jesus Christ the Son of God healing the blind beggar named Bartimaeus is truly remarkable. The healing of the blind was unheard of until Jesus Christ came to earth according to John 9:32 which states: **"Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind."** One of the prophecies concerning the Messiah is recorded in Isaiah 42:6-7 which states: **"I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."** Jesus the Messiah came not only to restore physical sight to blind men, He came to give



spiritual sight to those who are blinded by sin and Satan.

The account of Jesus healing blind Bartimaeus is a wonderful illustration of the way in which sinners are saved by the power of God. It is a terrible calamity for any man to be born physically blind, yet to be born spiritually blind is even worse because it renders the natural man without ability to see or understand the things of God.

### THE CONDITION OF BARTIMAEUS

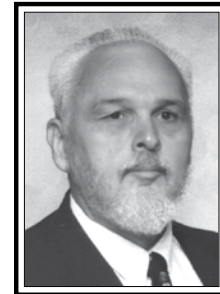
1. Our text records that Bartimaeus was blind. Some commentators say that his father, Timaeus was also a blind man. Bartimaeus was probably blind from birth which is the condition that every man is born into spiritually. Every son of Adam inherits a sinful nature that blinds him to the things of God. All men have been afflicted by the blinding disease of sin according to Romans 5:12 which states: **"Wherefore, as**

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## Faith and Repentance or Repentance and Faith

By Curtis Pugh  
(1944 - 2018)

Did you believe and then repent or did you repent and then believe? Or did someone tell you that you needed only to believe and did not need to repent? Please do not dismiss our present subject as mere "hair splitting." It is not! The question is this: does faith precede repentance or does repentance come first? This question is of utmost importance because the kind of faith that precedes



repentance (if it be called faith) is not saving faith. It is mere intellectual assent: mere agreement with the facts.

It is not that "resting your whole weight upon" Christ and His finished work. Therefore, if the only faith that a person has is the kind of faith that precedes

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## Not of This World

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia

**"I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. There-**



**fore put away from among yourselves that wicked person"** (I Cor. 5:9-13).

It is true that those who worship Christ, must do so in a spiritual manner. And, it is true that those who are born again by the Spirit of God are "not of this world." The Lord Jesus once told the Jews, **"And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world"** (John 8:23). Therefore, if we are the servants of Christ; and if we are the children of God; then we, too, are **"not of this world."**

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

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

## The Blind Beggar

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**by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."**

2. When a person is blind spiritually they cannot understand the things of God. They fail to see the realities of sin and its consequences.

Unregenerate men are unable to discern their lost estate; unable to behold the blackness of sin, or the terrors of the wrath to come. They fail to comprehend the saving power of the Gospel. I Corinthians 2:14 declares: **"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."** Our spiritual blindness is of such kind that it makes us think our vision of God and His ways is perfect. Most lost people go on in their blindness thinking they are alright because they are blinded by sin and Satan and are unable to see their need of Jesus Christ. They do not see themselves as sinners under the wrath of God. They do not see how offensive and repulsive their sins are in the sight of a Holy God. They fail to see their need to turn from sin and trust in Jesus Christ. They judge themselves as being just as good as everyone else and worthy of Heaven. My friend, if that is a description of your estate then you have been duped and blinded by Satan just as II Corinthians 4:3-4 declares: **"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."** Lost men willfully remain

blinded to Christ in spite of all the light and glory that He has manifested in the world. John 1:5 declares: **"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."**

3. Those who are physically blind are incapable of beholding the beauty of God's creation, their eyes are shut up to darkness. They are incapable of seeing God's handiwork. In like manner those who are spiritually blind cannot see the beauty and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is not perceived as the one who is altogether lovely, but rather He is despised and rejected of man. He is not seen as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings. He is not viewed as the desire of the nations, but rather the lost man's view of Christ is recorded in Isaiah 53:2: **"...he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."** The Lord Jesus is full of grace and truth, but the lost sinner would rather continue on in darkness. Sin has so darkened and blinded the heart and mind of the sinner that they love their sins more than they desire the righteousness of Christ. The spiritual ignorance of sinners is so great they would rather reject Christ and spend an eternity in the Lake of Fire than part with their cherished pet sins. Such blindness and darkness spells certain doom for the sinner according to John 3:19-20 which states: **"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."** Even though the glory of Christ may shine resplendently through the changed lives of

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His people the lost sinner does not perceive his need of Christ because he is blind. Ephesians 4:18-19 declares: **“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”** The affections of the lost man are so centered upon pleasing himself and enjoying the pleasures of sin he has no heart or affection for God and His ways.

4. There are some significant differences between the physical blindness of Bartimaeus and the spiritual blindness of lost sinners. Bartimaeus knew the condition he was in and earnestly sought for a cure. Lost sinners do not earnestly seek the Lord, in fact they spend little or no time investigating the need of their soul. They are so caught up with temporal things they have little time or energy to spend on eternal realities. Bartimaeus knew who to go to for the cure, the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet lost sinners want to go to everything but Christ in an attempt to save their conscience and appear religious. They will vainly go to the waters of baptism, the sacraments, and church membership; none of which have the power to open the blinded eyes of the sinner.

5. Not only was Bartimaeus blind, he was also poverty stricken. He was a beggar. This poor man was beset with two great evils--- blindness and poverty. To be both blind and poor is a combination of the sternest of circumstances. All the sons of Adam are likewise spiritual beggars with nothing of value to offer up to God. Our father Adam spent our birthright and lost our estates. Paradise, the homestead of our race, has

become dilapidated, and we are left in the depths of beggary without anything with which we may buy bread for our hungry souls, or raiment for our naked spirits. Blindness and beggary are the lot of all men spiritually unless Jesus visits us in love and grace.

Beggars are unable to help themselves. They must depend upon the generosity of others to survive. Spiritually this is the true estate of every lost man. He is at the mercy of God. If righteousness and the riches of grace are to come to him it must be through the benevolence and grace of God. No matter how much earthly wealth a man may have in this life, until he recognizes that he is a spiritual pauper who must depend upon the righteousness of Christ, he can never be saved. Dear sinner, you must see yourself as a helpless blind beggar if you are to ever see your need to repent and trust in the saving work of Jesus Christ.

## THE CRY OF BARTIMAEUS

**“And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me”** (Mark 10:47-48).

1. Judging from the cry of Bartimaeus it is obvious that he had heard of Jesus Christ prior to this occasion. Genuine saving faith always has its source in the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God as Romans 10:17 declares: **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”** He had heard of the mighty power of Christ to heal the diseased and give sight to the blind. He no doubt treasured some secret hope that if Jesus would ever pass his way he would seek His healing touch and cry out

for mercy. Bartimaeus believed that Jesus Christ had the power to heal his blinded eyes. Dear sinner, how many times have you heard the gospel preached? How many lives have you seen changed by the mighty power of God? You have witnessed the salvation of friends and relatives and the peace that has overflowed their souls yet you remain in unbelief. May God be pleased to open your eyes and grant you the faith to believe that Jesus has the power to heal even as He did Bartimaeus.

2. There was urgency in the cry of Bartimaeus. Imagine the excitement and anticipation that welled up in the heart of Bartimaeus when he heard that Jesus was passing by. He seized the opportunity and cried out with a loud voice for Christ to heal him. He cared not what his friends and relatives might think of him for seeking Christ. He cared not that those around him wanted him to shut up. He wanted Jesus Christ to heal him so he cried with great earnestness and urgency. When a sinner realizes the condition he is in and the condemnation he is under he will begin to seek Christ with a sense of urgency and persistence. When a sinner is genuinely convicted of his sin and convinced of his need for Jesus Christ he will not be apathetic concerning the salvation of his soul, but will gladly hearken to the admonition of II Corinthians 6:2 which declares: **“... Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”**

I like what C. H. Spurgeon said: “My dear hearers, are you now seeking Christ in earnest prayer? Be not afraid of being too earnest or too persevering. Go to Christ this day, agonize and wrestle with Him; beg Him to have mercy on you, and if He hear you not, go to Him again, and again, and again.

Seven times a day call upon Him, and resolve in your heart that you will never cease from prayer till the Holy Ghost hath revealed to your soul the pardon of your sin. When once the Lord brings a man to this resolve, ‘I will be saved. If I perish, I will still go to the throne of grace and perish only there,’ that man cannot perish. He is a saved man, and shall see God’s face with joy.”

3. The cry of blind Bartimaeus was a cry for mercy. He knew that he had no power to restore his own sight or heal himself. He had come to an end of himself and the only thing that he knew to do was to throw himself at the mercy of Christ. If sinners are to be saved they must abandon all their false hopes of self trust and self righteousness and look to Christ in faith, suing Him for mercy and peace. As long as sinners are holding on to even a shred of their own effort and goodness they will never be saved. They must come to see that Christ alone is able to save their sin sick soul.

## THE CALL OF BARTIMAEUS

**“And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee”** (Mark 10:49).

1. Jesus heard the repeated, earnest cries of Bartimaeus. In great compassion the Creator stood still for the creature and called Bartimaeus unto Himself. If men are to be saved they must be called and drawn by the power of Jesus Christ. Bartimaeus was one of Christ’s lost sheep that Jesus had come to call out of darkness as He had promised in John 10:16: **“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold,**

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**and one shepherd.”** Bartimaeus was one of the lost sheep that Jesus had determined to seek and to save before the world began as part of His earthly mission and work. Luke 19:10 declares: **“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”**

2. The call of Christ proved to be a comforting, cheering call. When the man came to fetch Bartimaeus and lead him to Jesus the first words they said to him were: **“Be of good comfort; he calleth thee.”** When the effectual call of Christ is extended to a troubled sinner it brings great comfort and peace to the heart. I will never forget the day when Jesus called me by His grace and lifted the burden of sin and gave me eternal life. My heart which was once full of bitterness and sin was immediately filled with joy and peace. My mind which was once clouded by sin and confusion was made to understand the glory of the Gospel of Christ. My mouth which had once been filled with cursing and blasphemy was now filled with praise for my Saviour. Comfort, peace, and worship overwhelm and flood the soul of a sinner who is enabled by Christ to embrace the call of Matthew 11:28 which states: **“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”** There is no rest in the world that can be compared to the spiritual rest that Christ gives to His elect in the effectual call. Oh, that God would be pleased to enlighten the blinded eyes of some poor sinner who is now reading these words.

## THE CONDUCT OF BARTIMAEUS

**“And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said**

**unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way”** (Mark 10:50-52).

1. From the conduct of Bartimaeus we may be assured that the call of Christ was inward and effectual. When Jesus calls a sinner in power there is no resistance of the heart, mind, or will. The sinner comes willingly because the power of God has inwardly wrought a work of grace, slain the enmity of the will, and caused the heart to submit to the claims of Christ. The effectual call of all of God's elect is a testimony to the truth of Psalms 110:3 which states: **“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. . . .”** The eager response of Bartimaeus to the call of Christ proves that when Christ summons His elect from the darkness of sin into His marvelous light there will be no resistance on the part of the sinner; only humble and glad submission. Notice also that Bartimaeus did not have to be tricked by a smooth talking preacher to come to Christ. There were no emotional or psychological tricks employed to get him to come to Christ. No one had to pull him down the aisle or coerce him to repent. No one asked him to bow his head, raise his hand, or repeat a prayer. Rather the word of Christ's power was sufficient to cause Bartimaeus to run to Christ in haste. Oh, that God's people would realize this simple truth in our day and stop employing the gimmicks, gadgets, and glimmer of the world in an effort to see sinners saved. All we need is the power of Christ operating effectually upon the hearts of sinners!

2. In his haste to run to Jesus he cast off the only thing that could have possibly hindered him, his upper garment. He then rose and came to Jesus. When God's call to the sinner is inward and effectual genuine repentance will be the result. The sinner will cast off those sins that previously hindered him from coming to Christ. He will gladly drink the bitter cup of repentance, change his mind, and turn from sin in all its forms. Dear sinner, what is hindering you from casting off your upper garment of sin and coming to Christ? Is it your pride, self-righteousness, reputation, or fear of what others may think or say? Cast off those stained garments of sin and flee to Christ for righteousness and refuge. As long as you remain unrepentant, stubbornly clinging to the garments of sin, the garments of sin will cling to you and ultimately be the cause of you perishing forever in the Lake of Fire.

3. The desire of Bartimaeus is seen by his answer to the question of Jesus. He did not ask for great riches, or his marriage fixed, or all his problems to be taken care of. Rather his chief desire was to have his sight so that he could see the glories of his Redeemer. More than anything else he wanted to behold the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus then immediately granted the request of Bartimaeus and gave him his sight. You would think that a man who had been born blind would immediately want to see his parents or some of the beauties of creation. But Bartimaeus was content to remain in the presence of Jesus and drink in His glory. When a sinner receives spiritual sight he begins to delight in the presence, power, and communion of Christ. The things that once charmed the sinner's hearts are no longer as

important as fellowship with his Lord.

4. When Bartimaeus received his sight he immediately followed Jesus in the way. There was no need for follow up work because his chief desire was to go where Jesus was and be led by Him. This is the mark of a true new convert. His desire will be to serve and obey Jesus Christ. The commands which once seemed so burdensome are no longer grievous to the heart and are cheerfully obeyed. The new convert will follow Jesus in the way of Scriptural baptism, church attendance, Bible study, prayer, giving, and witnessing. People who have genuinely been called out of the darkness of sin into the marvelous light of Christ will not have to be begged to come to church or do right. They will desire to please their Lord in cheerful obedience to His commands. They will fulfill the promise of Jesus in John 10:27 which states: **“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, AND THEY FOLLOW ME** (Emp. TR).”

## CONCLUSION

1. The physical blindness of Bartimaeus is likened to the spiritual blindness of the natural man who dwells in the darkness of sin.

2. The only One who could cure the physical blindness of Bartimaeus is also the only One who can cure the spiritual blindness of lost sinners, the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. When Jesus calls sinners in power they not only come to Him for salvation but they also follow Him in the way of sanctification and obedience. No one can make an honest claim of saving grace if he has never followed Jesus in the way.





# Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of  
Plant City, Florida



## SAFELY THROUGH 1,820 WEEKS

**“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” (Jer. 29:11).**

Today, the Lord has seen me safely through 1,820 weeks. Beloved that is a miraculous thing. A very common thing, but nonetheless, a miraculous one. Especially, as I do ponder the nature of my being. The Scriptures state that my life is but a vapor: **“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for little time, and then vanisheth away”** (James 4:14). Furthermore, in I Peter 1:24, **“For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.”** The Lord God reminded Adam that he was but dust saying **“Thou art dust”** (Gen. 3:19). And how that is true also of me. That life is so fragile; so dependent to continue on a very great many things. And so it is no small thing that God has delivered me safely through 1,820 weeks.

Ah, but there is more! For not only am I as a vapor, but I am also a very great sinner. Not only has the Lord brought such a frail creature as I safely through 1,820 weeks, but He has also long-suffered this sinful creature you see, I am vile (Job 40:4). My life had been an offense to God. For I came into this world a sinner: by nature, by choice, and by practice. I would

say that every imagination of the thoughts of my heart was only evil continually (Gen. 6:5). The Lord God who is of too pure of eyes to behold me, could have and should have destroyed me by the greatness of His wrath for having violated His Holy Law and sinning against Him. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love where with He loved me (Eph. 2:4) did exercise His long-suffering towards me, not willing that I should perish, but that I should come to repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (II Pet. 3:9; Acts 20:21). And to the praise of the glory of His grace (Eph. 1:6), The Lord God Himself, did most providentially and sovereignly set me under the preaching of His glorious gospel, wherein He did give me hearing ears that I might hear of my short-comings and failures; that all my righteousnesses were as filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). That His long-suffering towards me was exercised again and again to the point of continuously as the Gospel was made plain and clear that I had sinned against God and was in need of the Savior.

Yet, due to my sinful nature, choices, and practices, I did rebel at the preaching of the gospel all the more going about to establish my own righteousness, boasting of the greatness of my own righteousness, all the while rejecting the very Word of God, both written and living. Yet, stays of wrath were granted unto me all the while I did continue in my unrighteous state and labors. Until I was brought unto “the accepted

time; the day of salvation” (II Cor. 6:2) by His prevenient grace. And through the preaching of the Gospel, the witness and testimony of His saints, the Holy Spirit did convict me of my sins and the need of Jesus to be my Savior, as well as Christ’s ability to save me to the uttermost, that the Father did draw me unto His Son making me willing in the day of His power to cry out in faith **“God be merciful to me a sinner”** (Ps. 110:3; Luke 18:13; Heb. 7:25). And, that on the second Sunday of May, 1999 that God did convey unto me His promise that **“whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”** (Rom. 10:13) whereby the Lord did save this great sinner by greater grace through faith (Rom. 5:20). Yet there is more. For having now been saved by God’s grace, the Lord has seen me safely through another 910 weeks, to the present day of 1,820 weeks. In this I am reminded of two lists that the Apostle Paul did write: II Corinthians 4:8-9, **“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”** and II Corinthians 11:23-28, wherein the Holy Spirit led Paul to write of those **“perils”** of which he suffered. While I have not experienced the same things as Paul, I have been in “perils” of my own (many of which were/ are of my own doing through unfaithfulness), yet the Lord has seen me safely through unto this day. And through it all, I am are fully persuaded that there is not one thing that can separate me from the love of Christ, **“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”** (Rom. 8:38-39). Furthermore, I am persuaded that should the Lord see fit for me to go another 1,820 weeks upon this present evil world, He shall see me safely through those as well; for I am **“confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in [me], will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”** (Phil. 1:6). TO GOD BE THE GLORY!



## Faith and

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repentance, that person is not saved. That person has not been born again. That person has never had an experience of grace though he may believe the truth about sovereign grace, may teach it, may preach it – yea, may defend it vigorously. And that person may be you! Our subject demands that each of us examine himself as to his or her experience.

Let us be clear: there are many who believe and say that faith must come first and then repentance. That is the position of the “Campbellites” - those folk who like to call themselves “Church of Christ,” “Christian Churches,” and “Disciples of Christ,” in the main. There are also splinter groups of them called by other sometimes similar names such as “Christ’s Church,” etc. They teach that faith precedes repentance. Is theirs only an intellectual faith apart from an experience of grace? Is theirs like so many others, the faith of devils? James wrote, **“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble”** (Jam. 2:19). Baptists have historically stood on the

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ground that repentance precedes saving faith: who is right? Does it make a difference? We say it is the biggest of differences: the difference between saving faith and mere dead intellectual belief. The difference between being saved and being religious, but lost!

First of all let us establish this truth: the Bible teaches that repentance precedes saving faith. We know this, first of all, because when the two are mentioned together they are always – I repeat – always mentioned in that order: repentance first, faith second. When summing up his ministry, Paul said that he had gone about, **“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Acts 20:21). Repentance, then faith, is the message Paul preached to both Jews and Gentiles. The hyper-dispensationalists are in error saying that repentance was a message only for the Jews for Paul said he preached it to both groups. Considering that Paul spoke these words near the end of his recorded ministry would indicate that he had consistently preached these things. The Lord Jesus Himself preached, saying, **“...The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel”** (Mark 1:15). Here repentance is enjoined first, then faith. A further point to consider is this: Jesus said to the Pharisees, **“For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him”** (Matt. 21:32). Here it was

necessary for them to repent first: in order as Christ said **“...that ye might believe...”** Again, in Hebrews 6:1 the Bible speaks of **“...repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,”** showing the Bible order of repentance preceding faith. Let us point out here that while repentance is turning to God from sin, some sin is respectable and even religious in nature. Such sin is “dead works.” Not all sin that demands repentance is drunkenness, adultery, murder or other detestable sins. You may need to repent of your good works for salvation. You may need to repent of religious exercises and experiences. You may need to repent of prophesying, of casting out demons and working miracles according to Matthew 7:21-23. In those verses Jesus said religious people who were not known by Him were workers of **“iniquity.”** Mark it down: religion – even “Christianity” – apart from Christ is iniquity!

Furthermore, in I Thessalonians 1:8-9 Paul told how the faith of the saints in Thessalonica was well known. He further stated how their faith was the evidence of their repentance: hence faith followed repentance. His words were these: **“For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.”** Their turning was their repentance, for that is the nature and essence of repentance. Their faith evidenced their turning. Faith follows repentance.

Oh, how we fear for those whose whole experience is one of mere intellectual faith – the believing of Bible facts only and a turning not to God in faith, but a turning to baptism and other works. We fear they have had no experience of grace. Theirs is a religion of works. For it is in their works that they think to find salvation: in what they may call obedience to Christ or obedience to the gospel. There are a great many people today who are like the Israelites of Paul's day. They are devout, but devoted to the wrong thing. They are zealous, but not for God – they are zealous in going about to establish their own righteousness. Paul wrote of them, **“What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone”** (Rom. 9:30-32). Is the righteousness by which you think to be approved of God **“the righteousness which is of faith”** or is it **“by the works of the law?”** We would remind the reader that there are only two religions in the world. One is the religion that by works thinks to satisfy and please God – whether by baptism, bathing in the Ganges River, a pilgrimage to Mecca, or joining a church. The only other religion is the religion of faith in Christ alone – “putting your whole weight” on Him and Him alone for salvation.

Are you stumbling at the stumbling stone? Have you not been enabled to see that righteousness before God is by

faith? Saving faith – the faith that follows repentance – is called **“the faith of God's elect”** for it is **“the gift of God”** to them: see Titus 1:1 and Ephesians 2:8-9. Have you not read Romans chapter four where Abraham and his experience of faith is laid out as the experience to which all those whom God saves must and do come? Have you not read there of Abraham and how when promised the humanly impossible, **“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification”** (Rom. 4:20-25). Are you one of the **“us also, to whom it shall be imputed?”** Are you one who believes **“on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead?”** Or do you just believe about him **“that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead?”** Perhaps, never seeing yourself as God sees you – a sinner – you see no need for imputed righteousness. Perhaps you see no need for repentance. You see no need of turning to God because you think you are pleasing God by your religion or good deeds or by just being what you think is a good person. So you continue in your self-reformation and attempt by your own will to please God and yet you do not, will not, shall not, indeed you

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# Small Drops

By Joseph M. Sidders of  
Temperance, Michigan

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



## MOVING ON

When I first graduated college it was 2003. I was eager to start making money, and the next recession was not even a blip on my radar. I had a sales job for about a year that required me to fly to North Carolina once a month for meetings. Since I was single and without a family, the idea of getting to travel from southeast Michigan to the Carolinas once a month was a dream come true!

Next, I moved into business operations with a manufacturing company. I relocated to South Carolina, and later to Colorado with this firm. I still found myself flying with numerous opportunities to fly back to the Chicago or Cleveland markets for training and meetings.

The first three years of my professional life were spent traveling. One thing I learned very quickly in this post-9/11 world was to travel light. In the beginning, all overnight stays foolishly required a checked bag in my mind. Countless turnstiles, security checkpoints and lost items later, I learned it was best to keep everything with me in the cabin of the plane. Eventually even my longer trips consisted of one over-the-shoulder bag that could fit in my overhead compartment. I learned to be content with whatever could fit in the little metal demo stand at the airport entrance.

In his writing to Timothy, Paul wrote on this same lesson of contentment. **"But godliness**

**with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content"** (I Tim. 6:6-8).

When Jesus sent the disciples to **"preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick"** (Luke 9:2), He said unto them in Luke 9:3-5, **"Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them."** When they returned, we see in verse 10 that they did not bring souvenirs or keepsake treasures, but rather the stories of all that had been done in God's name.

In this life when we weigh ourselves down with all we can carry (or worse yet, all that we can afford), we severely distract ourselves with the "things" of this life rather than the true treasures, the gifts of God. Continuing his lesson to Timothy, Paul wrote for him to flee the temptation and snares that can come from foolish and hurtful lusts. These things we work so hard to devour, store and collect will **"drown men in destruction and perdition."** Paul instructed, instead, for his young pupil to **"follow after righteousness, godliness, faith,**

**love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses"** (I Tim. 6:11-12).

True happiness cannot be found in the things we purchase, but rather in the purpose for which we were purchased of God.



## Faith and

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cannot please God.

Why will you not believe that God imputes (credits) absolute righteousness by means of saving faith? Why will you not repent of your self-effort – your works – by which you think to please God? Will you repent of stumbling at the stumbling stone? You may have stumbled at Christ and His finished work. Will you repent of even this – turn to God – and trust (believe) with the faith of Abraham that you may have righteousness imputed to you? Have you not read that **"...they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham"** (Gal. 3:7)? God says, **"...they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on**

**a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith"** (Gal. 3:9-14). Many today boast they are not under the Old Testament – the law – but have subjected themselves to a man made law of works for salvation just as horrendous as any Israelite ever was. This, too, requires repentance toward God!

Why will you continue in your dead works? Only the blood of Christ can free you from the slavery of false religion: the notion that works can save – whether baptism or your futile attempt at ceasing from sin. The Bible says, **"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"** (Heb. 9:14). Your conscience tells you that you must reform, you must obey, you must serve God, you must be a slave to the law, you must cease from sin – but your experience tells you that you cannot. Your conscience has been taught that works will save you. But they cannot! The blood of Christ alone can cleanse your conscience and give you liberty from dead works! What you need is the experience of God's grace wherein the Spirit of God moves in the new birth changing everything so that you turn to God (repentance) and in total utter dependence on Christ's finished work look to Him. That is saving faith. Jesus said, **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again"** (John 3:6-7).



# Not of This World

(Continued from page 1) ♦

The Lord Jesus told His disciples, **“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you”** (John 15:19). There is something markedly different about those who are called into the service of Jesus Christ. The salvation that takes place in our lives is something that is effective in a spiritual fashion and is successful in an eternal way. This salvation ties us to God and Heaven and loosens the bonds of sin and flesh which otherwise tie us to this realm. Of course, we are different from the people of this world; of course, the world will hate us for our differences. And yet, this is the manner of the salvation that God has granted unto us – we are saved from and out of this world, and we are saved for God and unto life eternal. The people of God are not any longer meant to be like this world, or to have an affinity for it. We are “not of this world.”

However, what I want us to think about is how that even though we are “not of this world,” still yet we must live in this world. How do we go about doing this? And what is required of those who live in this world, and yet are not a part of this world?

## SPIRITUAL CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

First, I want to establish the fact that the children of God are citizens of the Kingdom of God. Sure, we are citizens of this world – citizens of various nations, lands, peoples, societies, organizations, etc. – from a human perspective. However, every person who is saved by the grace of God, is called unto a higher and a better citizenship; we are each brought into the

Family of God, and made citizens of that Kingdom of God, which is (for now) entirely spiritual in nature. Our Lord and King is Jesus Christ. Our highest duty is to serve and honor Him. We obey the Lord before and above all mortal or human masters or lords. We owe our allegiance to God and His Son, while any human or mortal allegiance must be subject to this first and primary duty (and privilege) of following the Lord.

As proof of the invisible and spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God, I want to refer you to the example that our Lord and Saviour set for us. The Lord Jesus Christ once told Pilate, **“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence”** (John 18:36). As of the time of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, His Kingdom had not been yet established in the mortal realm. Even though the disciples and His followers – indeed, seemingly all of the Jews who were acquainted with the power and the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ – were anticipating that Jesus would set up an earthly kingdom, it was not yet time for that kingdom to take a physical form. Instead, the Kingdom of God was established in a spiritual fashion, taking root in the hearts and minds of His people, and its presence was felt in the lives, the attitudes, and the service of those who followed Jesus Christ.

I do believe that the Kingdom of God will take a physical form on this earth, when the Lord Jesus Christ will come to reign over this world for 1,000 years; this is the Millennial Reign spoken of in the prophets, and which is referred to by Jesus Christ and His

apostles. However, until then, the ones who are called into the service of the Lord will labor on, and we will serve, as a part of the spiritual Kingdom of God. We know and love the Word of God, and we look forward to the coming of that Kingdom in a world-wide and visible fashion; but, until then, we are happy and eager to serve the Lord as a part of that Kingdom which is not of this world. Consider the words of the book of Hebrews, in reference to the faithful forefathers and mothers who have served the Lord in the past: **“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city”** (Heb. 11:13-16). We who are the children of God are not of this world in the sense that our salvation comes from Heaven and God, and our focus and our priorities are now Heavenly and godly, and our duties and allegiance are now with God rather than men. We only sojourn in this mortal realm; eternity in Heaven awaits us. And, while we sojourn here, we must live as children of God, and citizens of His Kingdom. Peter said, **“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul”** (I Peter 2:11).

## GO YE INTO THE WORLD

So, what do we do in this mor-

tal realm, seeing that we are not of this world? Do we live as if the world does not exist? Should we be oblivious of all that goes on around us and only look at God and Heaven? I do think it would be good for each of us to look at the world from a Heavenly perspective, and base our words, our deeds, and our very manner of living on the knowledge that God is our Lord, and this world is not our home. However, God has left us here, and I am certain He has a work for each of us to accomplish as long as we remain in this world.

I want us all to realize that we cannot ignore this world; nor are we meant to isolate ourselves from the world as a whole. In fact, when the Lord gave the Great Commission to His first church, we read these words: **“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”** (Mark 16:15). Though we, as citizens of the Kingdom of God, are not of this world; still, we are sent as emissaries into this world. We are sent to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to a world that is unaware, ignorant, and willfully blind to the truth found in the Gospel. We must bring into the world the knowledge of God and the world to come. I believe this duty is mainly granted to the churches of Jesus Christ. And yet, whoever and wherever the children of God are found, they should labor and work in the cause of Jesus Christ. **“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into**

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# Narrow Paths

By Doug Newell IV of  
Clendenin, West Virginia

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

## FAMOUS FOR A REASON

**"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 3:16). I suppose John 3:16 is one of the most familiar verses in the Bible. It is a blessed verse. A glorious sentence spoken by our gracious Saviour. God in His infinite wisdom, ordained that men would receive salvation and the forgiveness of sins through faith, the gift of God. God saves by grace. Full and free, complete and perfect salvation.

The love of God is on full display in John 3 showing us God saves unworthy, undeserving sinners. It does not beautify love to say that God loves everyone equally, all in the same way, and some of His loved ones go to hell, and some do not. Does it uphold and beautify and make great a love that loves me the same way as Pharaoh? Or, that I am loved the same way and as much as God loves Goliath. Does it inspire worship and praise that God loves me the same as He loved the rich man in Hell?

Other than several inches, what is the difference between me and Goliath? Other than political power, what is the difference between me and Pharaoh? Other than money, what is the difference between me and the rich man? You could argue (and would be correct) that these men are far my superior. Goliath was a great champion. A war hero. A battle-hardened famous warrior.

I played football in High School. Pharaoh was the most powerful king on Earth. He had the power of life and death in his words. He ruled a nation and is famous, even today. Pyramids and structures still stand built in honor of the throne he held. I work for the state of West Virginia. Do you really need me to point out the difference between a rich man and a preacher? Superior strength. Superior intellect. Superior wealth, power, and influence. There really is nothing I have that is any better than these three men. Knowing my heart, like I do, I can not say that I am morally superior.

Why am I saved? Why are they in Hell and I am on my way to Heaven? Not because I am any better, smarter, stronger, or worthier. I am saved because the Father so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son as a sin-sacrifice, an atonement, a propitiation for sins of those He loved. The Son expiated the sins of those people, forgiving and paying the sin debt. And, according to the wisdom of God, we receive the forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and escape the punishment of Hell, by faith in the finished work of Christ. **"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 3:16), displays God's great love, His perfect salvation, and the triumph of His eternal plan. I implore you, to believe in the

only begotten Son and receive everlasting life.

## WOUNDED FOR ME

**"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"** (Isa. 53:5-6).

Three men hung on three crosses. Two were nailed for their transgressions. Tried and convicted for their crimes, they suffered the agonizing death sentence of crucifixion. They paid for their crimes against Rome with their lives. The third man was pierced for a different reason. He was not wounded for His transgressions, but for mine. He was not crushed for His iniquities, but for mine. Jesus died in the place of His people. Jesus suffered in our stead. The Romans found the two thieves guilty, but Pilate said, I find no fault with Jesus. The bodily pain Jesus endured is unimaginable. Remove from your mind the paintings and statues where Jesus hangs on a cross, with a few drops of blood upon His brow. No, the physical torture of the cross is beyond compare (Psalm 22:14-17); but they pale in comparison to the suffering of the Lord for our sins. Here, on the cross, the Lord Jesus received the punishment I deserved for my sins, and paid my sin debt. He was my substitute, dying for me and paying my pardon with His blood.

Like sheep, we have all gone astray, going our own way. Caring nothing for Christ, we walked and wandered wherever we desired to go. Caring not for the voice of the shepherd, lost in the darkness of this world. The hymn tells the

story, "Years I in and vanity and pride, caring not my Lord was crucified." Before salvation, we are like a sheep without a shepherd. A sheep will wander wherever it pleases, but would not find his way back home on his own. Without the care of the shepherd to protect, lead, and feed, the lost sheep is subject to many dangers. But we were not without a shepherd. The Lord, came to rescue His sheep. No man took His life from Him, but He laid it down to give His life for mine. As I turned my way, for myself, and my pleasure, my Lord turned towards Golgotha and was wounded for my transgressions. While I wandered astray looking for peace and comfort, my peace was purchased in His body on the tree. While I looked for fulfillment and satisfaction in sin, by His stripes I was healed.

The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. The prophecy weaves back and forth between the people's perception of Christ versus the reality of Christ's work. Jesus did not die as a martyr for a cause. He did not die as a sinner for His sins. Jesus died as the scapegoat. Jesus, the lamb of God, dying to expiate our sins. The just for the unjust.



**"The flowers appear on the earth..."**

(Song of Solomon 2:12)



# Other Little Hills

By Timothy J. Hille of  
Ashland, Illinois

"The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness" (Psalms 72:3).



## A CHRISTIAN CONSIDERATION OF WINTER'S BLAST

**"Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures" (Ps. 135:6-7).**

**"He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold" (Ps. 147:16-17)?**

**"Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word" (Ps. 148:7-8).**

Just as we are to resign ourselves to the will of God that is revealed in His providential rulings over our lives, wherein He either permits or refuses to allow us to do certain things, we ought also, as the scripture writers did, look at His works in creation and providence and learn to see in them the truths that His Word teaches us. If we were to look at the current wintry weather as merely a nuisance, a hindrance, an obstacle to our wishes, and engage in griping and complaining, then we would be showing no evidence of Christ-likeness, whose very words during His earthly ministry were, **"Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight"** (Matt. 11:26); and, **"nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done"** (Luke 22:42). When stormy wind and waves seemed to threaten the

very lives of His disciples, He said to them, **"Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?"** (Mark 4:40)? Do we have faith to see, in all things that come to pass, the will and the purpose of God? Do we have faith to see that when storms and wind and snow and hail and pain and temporal hindrances are in our path, that our Heavenly Father rules over all these things, and that not any of these things can come to pass without His permission, and that in them we are to praise and glorify Him as King, God, and Lord of all and over all? Do we say with our lips as well as with our attitude and our behavior, **"Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever"** (Dan. 2:20)?

One of the things that is evident in the wintry blast that is sent upon us that the world-lings ignore to their own peril is that this is but a small display of the arsenal of the almighty living God, and but a small portion of what He has laid up in His treasures, that He may call forth at His pleasure. Many are presently submitting to the eternal record that will be brought forth at the judgment, when the record books are opened, words of cursing, blasphemy, bitterness, and anger, but none of thanks and praise to the God who is able to dispense from His treasures of war such things to cripple the puny might of man. We will, no doubt, be told in the coming days how that the amount of snowfall, the degree of cold, and the impact of the weather are due, not to the almighty and sovereign hand of the living God who made Heaven

and earth and all that in them is, but to man and his doings, which are supposedly reshaping the weather patterns of the earth. I tell you that God can do more with one snowflake than man can do in a thousand years of concerted effort, whether good or bad.

I have pointed out the conduct of the lost to say this: be not thou like them. Be not like those who ignore God, who ignore His Word, who forget God, and fail to praise His name and give Him thanks! Once you failed to do so. Never again do so. **"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God"** (Ps. 9:17). Are you one of them who forget God? Will you be counted amongst the nations that forget God, or as one of the holy nation, the peculiar people, whom the Lamb of God cleansed from all iniquity in His blood, and redeemed unto Himself as a special people for Himself, who are zealous of good works? Talk no more like the wicked who know not God, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, and let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, blessing God and men with truth and Christ-like love.

Notice how each of these Psalms began. **"Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise him, O ye servants of the LORD"** (Ps. 135:1). **"Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely"** (Ps. 147:1). **"Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights"** (Ps. 148:1). If you can get nothing more than this out of these verses, at least get this, that the Lord is to be praised by you. If you have not praised Him yet today, from the

heart, you have very likely wasted the entirety of the day thus far. The thing most worthy of your time every day, every hour, is the hearty praise and worship of Him who gives you life, breath, and all things, and Who gave His only begotten Son to redeem you from all your trespasses and sins, and to cleanse you and make you holy, that you might not perish, but have everlasting life. If you cannot sincerely and genuinely with your lips audibly praise the Lord each day, not in the show of a hypocrite, but in humble, grateful, and adoring worship, then how is it that you can profess to know that you have been saved from a devil's hell for all eternity, and made a child and an heir of God through Jesus Christ? Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God in a dungeon after having been beaten like criminals. Job worshipped God after having the worst day anyone has ever had in all of human history. **"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice"** (Phil. 4:4), is the command of the New Testament.

I will tell you that I have seen all throughout this wintry blast, looking out the windows of my house: the little birds, for whom your Heavenly Father careth, feeding. He has kept them safe and fed; and He likewise sustains us all throughout our earthly pilgrimage, no matter the degree of cold, depth of snow, gloom of cloud, or biting chill of wind. Has He not promised to do much, much more for us? **"For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure"** (Ps. 135:4). **"He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they**

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## Other Little Hills

(Continued from page 10) ♦

**have not known them. Praise ye the LORD**" (Ps. 147:19-20). **"He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD"** (Ps. 148:14).

Oh, exceeding great and precious promises are made to us, of eternal inheritance; of unimaginable blessings now and countless untold blessings hereafter; of perpetual watch care and provision; of unceasing omnipotent companionship; of new and fresh and unceasing mercies and lovingkindnesses, like the sunrise of every new day; and of a home eternal, in the heavens, not made with hands, which never perishes or decays, and over which shines the light of God Himself and of the Lamb!

If nothing else, let the winter's blast make you think of your heavenly home, where never cold, nor pain, nor cloud will be known; and cheer yourself in God with the joyful anticipation of His promise, so that all complaining, murmuring, grouching, and spiritual slothfulness are cast off. Bury those things in the snow, yea, in the grave; but rise up to walk in the likeness of Christ, Who with joy endured the cross, ignoring the shame, and has received for us and bestowed upon us the many wondrous gifts of the treasures of God's amazing grace.



## Not of This World

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**his harvest**" (Matt. 9:36-38).

Even in our text verses, there is an intimation of these things – especially that we are to live (not hide) in this present world, and

we ought not to seek to leave it or ignore it. We read in I Corinthians 5:9-10, **"I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world."** The point Paul is making here, is that in order for us to leave sin entirely, we must leave this world entirely. We ought not condone sin, but we cannot ignore its presence. In fact, should we not be the ones that would cry out against sin?

We do go into the world, just as the Great Commission commands us; but our starting point – our point of reference – is different from others who go into the world. Other religions, or even apostate portions of Christianity, may go into the world with some good intention; however, their starting point – their point of reference – is generally something and someone different than the true Gospel, and Jesus Christ. Without the church of Jesus Christ, these other forces are powerless to effect eternal good. It is imperative that the people of the New Testament churches go into the world with the Gospel, and with the truth of the Word of God! We have what (Who) the world of sinners needs! We bring the Gospel of salvation to a people who are in desperate need for a Saviour! Our Saviour came from Heaven. He saved us, and granted us a Heavenly citizenship. We then, are sent into the world to bring those others to Christ who are ordained unto salvation.

### SEPARATE YOURSELVES FROM THE WORLD

We have just noticed how that God has sent us into this world as His emissaries. And, I did previously state that we ought not to

isolate ourselves from this world – because we are meant to be ministers and witnesses in this world. And yet, we still find that the New Testament Scriptures make it plain that we are to separate ourselves from the world. In fact, in our text verses we read these words: **"But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person"** (I Cor. 5:13). And, in the verses that precede our text verses, we read this: **"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us"** (I Cor. 5:7). It seems that Paul is instructing the church in Corinth to distance themselves from sin and sinners – in particular this man that had committed fornication. The Lord would have us to live separate from sin, in the sense that if we hold it close, we will be tainted with it; if we treat it lightly, our witness will be adversely affected. Well, if this is the case, then how are we to mix with the world, and bring the Gospel to them?

I believe there are some other Scriptures which make these things a little easier to understand. We read the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 12:1-2 in one of the most famous New Testament passages concerning separation from the things of the world, **"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."** We are meant to be transformed from sinful behavior unto godly behavior. We are meant to show forth to the world,

the manner of life of those who are subject to the will and pleasure of God. It is not unreasonable – it is, in fact, very reasonable that God would expect each of us who are His children, to present our bodies living sacrifices unto God and His service, always willing to do His will and to please Him. This manifestly distinguishes us from the lives of men and sinners in this world!

We read the words of our Lord and Saviour as He prayed for His people in the High Priestly prayer: **"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"** (John 17:14-16). In this passage the Lord Jesus Christ makes it clear that it was never His intention to take His people out of this world as soon as they were saved. Rather, it was His intention, and it was likewise the will of God, that those that were saved would live out their mortal lives in the lands and the realms of this world. And yet, just as Jesus Christ was "not of this world" and lived a life separate from sin; even so, the people of God who are "not of this world" should also live lives that are separate from sin. We remain in this world, so that we are able to serve God, and are able to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with sinners; but, we do not live as sinners.

Even while it was His will that His people should live in this world; it was, at the same time, His desire that His people would be kept **"from the evil."** Both preservation in God's part, and perseverance on man's part are in

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## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. What are “idle words” that Christ is speaking about in Matthew 12:36?

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By an “idle word” is meant, what the Jews call, “light conversation,” and “vain discourse,” as the Hebrew Gospel of Munster reads it here; frothy language, unprofitable talk, which, though it does not directly hurt God or man, yet is of no use to speaker or hearer; and yet even this, in the last general and awful judgment, if not forgiven, and repented of, must be accounted for; and much more such horrid blasphemies the Pharisees had vented against Christ, and the Spirit of Christ. Look at Matthew 12:32, **“And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”** I believe this to be the unpardonable sin!

The Jews have a saying pretty much like this, “That even, ‘for any light conversation,’ which passes between a man and his wife, he shall ‘be brought to judgment.’” Many times husbands and wives are not careful in their tone or of their speech to each other.

Paul said in II Corinthians 1:17, **“When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh,**

**that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay?”** Everything that came out of Paul’s mouth was for the glorification of Christ; his words were clear and profitable language. Preachers that speak a bunch of words that do not mean anything are very much in jeopardy of judgment for what they say, or should I say do not say. The same goes for me and the other writers in this Forum, we better write words that mean something other than a bunch of jibber jabber (foolish or worthless talk; nonsense).

Every “idle word” is the most seemingly insignificant sin, even a slip of the tongue and it carries the full potential of all Hell’s evil. **“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell”** (James 3:6). No infraction against God’s holiness is therefore a trivial thing, and each person will ultimately give account of every such indiscretion. There is no truer indiscretion of a bad tree than the bad fruit of speech. In Matthew 12:33, **“Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit,”** and verse 35, **“A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.”**

The poisonous snakes were known by their poisonous mouths revealing evil hearts. **“O**

**generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh”** (Matt. 12:34). So if we compare this verse with Luke 6:45, **“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh,”** we can see that every person is judged by his words, because they reveal the state of his heart.

I am always amazed that people take lightly Exodus 20:7, **“Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”** They seem to pay no attention to the last part of this verse, **“for the LORD will not hold him guiltless!”** And yet we hear it more and more. I ask! What part of “Thou shalt not” do not they understand? God Bless!

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Matthew 12:36-37 declares: **“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”**

The Lord Jesus Christ gives a solemn and stern warning regarding the flippant, irreverent, blasphemous, and arrogant words that men use on a daily basis. Since God is a God of holiness

and perfection, I take this verse to mean exactly what it says. If a man’s words do not measure up to the holy standard of God’s Word and His righteous nature, he will give account for his speech in the day of judgment. There will be a book of remembrance opened at the Great White Throne Judgment that records all the wicked works of the unsaved. I expect that book to contain every idle word that unsaved men and women have ever spoken, and they will be judged accordingly, which will determine their level of punishment in the Lake of Fire for all eternity (Rev. 20:11-15).

To be more specific, I am sure there are several kinds of idle words that God will bring into judgment. The moral law forbids bearing false witness, so words of lying and slander will be brought to account. Revelation 21:8 states: **“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”**

Words of blasphemy, especially those that are directed against the person and work of the Holy Spirit will be judged according to the warning of the Lord Jesus Christ: **“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come”** (Matt. 12:31-32).

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## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. When will the Jews begin to offer blood sacrifices again, before or after the Rapture?

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**"And he (the AntiChrist) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the (Seventieth) week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (Dan. 9:27).**

The Abomination of Desolation will occur at the mid-point of Daniel's Seventieth Week, also known as the Seven Year Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21) and the Time of Jacob's Trouble (Jer. 30:7). The future fulfillment of Antiochus Epiphanes, the "vile person" of Daniel 11:21, will come also into the rebuilt Jewish temple and verse 31 states that **"...arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate."** The AntiChrist will pollute the temple with a sacrifice of uncleanness and will erect an abominable statue of idolatry in the Holiest of Holies.

So, this leaves a maximum timetable of 3.5 years for the Jews to build a functioning temple with acceptable blood sacrifices, if the resumption of worship were to

occur after the Rapture. Certainly, with all the preparations that Orthodox Jews have been making since 1948, this is not either impossible or unfeasible. Not just the stones, pillars and structure of the temple are ready to be erected at a moment's notice, but also the furniture, tool implements and all preparations for proper, clean and holy sacrifices have been lined up. Even the red heifer of Numbers 19:2, that is necessary for the purification of altars, priests and utensils, has been reportedly bred and separated in 2018. That makes seventy years of preparation, which has always been a number of interest for the children of Israel. Selah!

The "holy covenant" is to be made by the man of sin, who is to be revealed after the Rapture, **"and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God"** (II Thess. 2:3-4). In the Rapture aftermath fall-out of social chaos, the Anti-Christ will grab political power as outlined in Revelation 13:1-6: **"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, ...and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the**

**beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."** Also clarified in Daniel 8:23-25: **"And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance (AntiChrist), and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many."**

Actually, even the Jewish sacrifice is abominable and unacceptable in God's eyes, by this generation of Christ-denying Jews. Not until Armageddon and the return of King Jesus to Jerusalem will the Temple be reinstated millennially, as prophesied in Ezekiel 40-48. The time of the daily sacrifice and the time until the ultimate sanctuary cleansing is given earlier in Daniel 8:13-14: **"..How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."** That

is 6 years, 4 months, 20 days from the beginning of the daily sacrifice resumption to the Armageddon cleansing. That leaves 7 months, 10 days after the beginning of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week, which starts fairly soon after the Rapture. So, if I had to say, I would say the temple will begin the daily blood sacrifices about eight months after the Rapture, God willing. Dearly beloved, the time is short! **"Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"** Selah! Think about it!

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To be honest, I am not sure, but will do my best to try and give a suitable answer to the question.

**"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:13-14)?**

**"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:4).**

**"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:26-27).**

The above Scriptures reinforce

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# Forum #1

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We are warned in Scripture against making rash vows with our mouth, so those vows left unfulfilled will be judged. Ecclesiastes 5:2, 4-6 reveals: **"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few...When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands."**

We are also warned in Scripture against corrupt communication (Eph. 4:29); evil and malicious speaking (Eph. 4:31); filthy jokes and foolish jesting (Eph. 5:4). The Scripture also condemns tale bearing, tattling, and gossip (I Tim. 5:12-13). I have only scraped the surface of all the Bible has to say about "idle words."

Another question may be asked: "How do all the idle words of saved people come into judgment?" I believe saved people are fully capable of speaking all the idle words cited above with the exception of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which cannot be forgiven according to the words of Christ. The good news is that Jesus clearly stated that we may be forgiven for idle words. The Spirit of God who dwells within each believer will do the work of judgment by way of conviction. We must hearken to His sovereign work

by confessing and forsaking idle words according to the promises in I John 1:7, 9: **"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin...If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."**

The exhortation and application drawn from Matthew 12:36-37 is clear and direct. Guard your thoughts and words by daily praying with the Psalmist: **"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer"** (Psa. 19:14). Replace idle and wicked words with words of edification, grace, and encouragement so that you will not be guilty of grieving the Holy Spirit: **"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption"** (Eph. 4:29-30). Learn to bridle your tongue and bring it under the control of the Holy Spirit so you will not say stupid, mean, hateful, hypocritical, bitter and wicked things (James 3:2-17). Seek the Lord and ask Him to teach you to speak like a believer who is washed in the blood and sanctified by the Spirit, instead of talking like a reprobate or a hypocrite. Use your words to praise God, to pray, to witness and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 4:15 states: **"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."** Speak the truth in love in your home, in the Lord's

church, in the workplace, and on social media. What a powerful transformation would take place if God's people would be convicted of speaking "idle words" and endeavor to govern their speech according to the glory of God! Let us daily make application of the exhortation found in Colossians 3:16-17: **"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."**

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**"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned"** (Matt. 12:36-37). The Greek word "argos" is translated as "idle" in our text. It is also translated that way in I Timothy 5:11-13, **"But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."** The Strong's definition of "argos" is "lazy or inactive; useless or

barren." Basically, "unproductive vs. fruitful." Selah! Think about it!

The Bema or Judgment Seat of Christ is what awaits every elect child of God. Not our salvation from our sin will be judged, that already occurred at Calvary, where Christ took every single sin of ours, and paid the debt in full for every elect sheep. Any sins not paid for at Calvary, will be acknowledged and condemned at the Great White Throne Judgment where the "reprobate lost" will be judged **"according to their works"** (Rev. 20:11-15). The Bema Seat judgment is about service, not salvation. **"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"** (II Cor. 5:10). According to our text, I believe the "idleness" of our service will be judged thereat.

Sin—the transgression of God's holy law. Rebellion—rejection of God's authority over us. Iniquity—unclean desires against God's holy will. Evil words that describe us before the Lord saved us, right? And yet, they continue to influence and even hold sway over our lives at times. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, it is to my joy to realize that Jesus paid the penalty-debt of my sin, rebellion and iniquity. But in our service to God in our state of new birth, the carnal flesh still drags us back and down. How sternly we must consecrate our new life to His law, authority, and will. If we do not sanctify our lives by filling them tirelessly with righteousness, purity, godliness, and love, we will fall back into the miry clay of depravity. **"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do**

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# Forum #1

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**mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:13).**

Knowing therefore the difficult task we have of suborning the flesh to godliness, it is appropriate to use the word “idle” or “unfruitful” when remarking on this “service judgment.” Is it a sin to be idle? If we have opportunity to sacrifice our “TV time” to witness or read our Bible? We can rationalize our leisure time all that we want, but many times it is “wasteful” and a clear snub unto our Saviour, Who was anything but “idle and unfruitful!” If we continually make choices that are unproductive, we are sinning. **“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. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:13-17).**

James, the servant of Christ, is pointing out the short opportunity we have to glorify our God and what an awful waste we so often “idly” make of our time. Every moment is an opportunity, Lord willing, to give God glory. To even use the phrase “Lord willing” displays an attitude of responsibility to God, an acknowledgment of a continual debt to Jesus Christ for every moment of freedom that has been given us to serve. Not to serve self, that is idle sin. We need to serve the One that bought

our souls. **“Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. ...ye are not your own...For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (I Cor. 7:21, 6:19-20).** Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



## Forum #2

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the foolishness for blood sacrifices. Blood sacrifices are no longer accepted by God, in fact they are an abomination unto a Holy and Sovereign God! Jesus Christ was the only sacrifice that would appease the wrath of God on sinful mankind. And yet the Jews had a special ceremony that was held in the Cardo in Jerusalem on Thursday, March 10, 2016. It was the beginning of the month of Adar, or, to be precise, the second day of Rosh Chodesh Adar Bet. In temple Times, the new month was considered a minor holiday and the ceremony, a reenactment of the Temple service, gloriously illustrated that. The article was titled “Priests Practice for Third Temple in Authentic Reenactment of Biblical Temple Service.” Also, there was a report that stated, “Sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb Returns to Jerusalem After Millennia” in April of 2016.

Some of the Jews have made an illustration of the Temple to be built and have built a replica alter and actually sacrificed a

sheep. There is much more, but this is enough to know that they are preparing and getting ready to sacrifice when the third temple is built. They quote Isaiah 56:7 as their reason for doing this, **“Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.”** The only problem with this is Isaiah is referring to the Millennial Reign of Christ. In the kingdom of the Messiah, the Jerusalem temple will be the focal point for worship of the Lord by people of all ethnic backgrounds. Jesus cited a violation of this anticipation by His generation in His second cleansing of the temple: Jewish leaders had made the temple a commercial venture:

**“And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Matt. 21:13).**

**“And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Mark 11:17).**

**“Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Luke 19:46).**

Now to answer the question after all of that! The temple is in preparation for rebuilding and that will not take place (I believe) until after the Rapture, and it will be very shortly and the blood sacrifices will start up again. Even though the Jews will make their attempts to offer up sacrifices unto the Lord because they will be deceived and believe the Antichrist is the Messiah, God will not accept them. There is a

remnant though of **“an hundred forty and four thousand”** that has been chosen and will not have been deceived by the Antichrist, and will come to realize that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah and be saved around the middle of the tribulation’s first 3.5 years (Revelation 14:1-5).

Just a little bit more information about this sacrifice that was done in 2016, “The Sanhedrin established a committee in 2004 concerning the korban pesach to work in cooperation with all religious, legal, and administrative authorities. The committee has attempted several times to obtain the government’s permission to perform sacrifices. Legal documents were sent to the Prime Minister, the Supreme Court, and the Chief of Police. The Prime Minister did not respond. The Supreme Court appeared to uphold the right to perform the sacrifice, but denied it on grounds of security. This answer was reiterated by the Chief of Police.”

Not sure I answered the question to the full satisfaction for the questioner, but hopefully the other writers have a better take on this question. God Bless!

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This is a difficult question which requires a great deal of labored and careful study. It is hard to give a brief answer in the Forum. I shall endeavor to be concise and to the point.

All expiatory sacrifices to merely cover sin were done

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## Forum #2

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away with when Jesus Christ offered Himself as a perfect, living sacrifice. John the Baptist announced with powerful clarity: **"...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"** (John 1:29). This concept of the one and only sacrifice that would take away the sins of the elect among Jews and Gentiles the world over, was foreign to the Jewish mind. They knew that the Old Testament sacrifices only covered sin temporarily and had no ability to put away sin, clear their conscience, or abolish their guilt. They also did not believe that the sacrifices offered extended to Gentiles. The finished work and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only one qualified and capable of putting away sin. Much of the Book of Hebrews is dedicated to establishing this fact. Hebrews 9:12 and 26 state: **"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us...For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."** Hebrews 10:8-14 also attests to this fact: **"Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified throughout the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering**

**oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."** The sacrifice of Jesus Christ was the final expiatory sacrifice and the only one able to put away or take away sin and secure complete and absolute justification for all the elect throughout the world, of Jews and Gentiles alike. The glorified saints in Heaven will be found declaring this truth as they anticipate the day when they will return with Christ to the earth to reign with Him in His Millennial glory: **"And they sung a new song saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth"** (Rev. 5:9-10).

All that is stated above does not negate the fact that there will be unbelieving Jews during the Tribulation who will be offering sacrifices. The Scriptures clearly reveal that the antichrist will cause the sacrifices to cease in an event known as the abomination of desolation at the midpoint of the Tribulation Period. Daniel 9:27 states: **"And he (antichrist, TWR) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."**

Jesus referred to this event in His prophetic statement regarding the Tribulation Period (Matt. 24:15-22). So if we are to take the literal meaning of Scripture, it is obvious there will be an attempt by the Jews during the Tribulation Period to reinstitute expiatory sacrifices. Their attempt will be short lived as the antichrist will cause the sacrifices to cease as he sets himself up as God in the temple of God. I have no doubt that the antichrist will be a literal person who will attempt to set himself up as God. The personal pronouns used to identify the **"man of sin"** demand a literal interpretation as II Thessalonians 2:3-6 reveals: **"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time."**

During the Millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the earth for 1,000 years, the elect among the nation of Israel will be regenerated by the Spirit and washed in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Elect Israel will be spiritually reconciled to God and physically restored to the land promised to them in the Abrahamic Covenant as **"an everlasting possession"** (Gen. 17:5-8). Jesus prophetically stated that the apostles would assist Him in judging the 12 tribes of Israel at this time: **"And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have**

**followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"** (Matt. 19:28). The truth of Israel's future restoration is an undeniable fact supported by Old and New Testament prophetic Scripture (Jeremiah 3:17-19; 23:5-6; 31:31-37; 32:36-42; 33:14-16; 46:27-28; Ezekiel 34:24-31; 36:24-38; Romans 11).

What is also crystal clear is the building of a Millennial Temple in Israel that will be entirely new and different from the Old Testament Temple. The dimensions and worship of the Millennial Temple is recorded in Ezekiel 40-48. Included in the Temple worship will be sacrifices that are memorial in nature as opposed to expiatory in nature. God will raise up a particular group of Levites to oversee the worship, ceremonies, and sacrifices associated with the Millennial Temple identified as the sons of Zadok (Ezekiel 40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11). These sacrifices are not intended to replace the sacrifice of Christ or regress to the Old Testament system. They will be memorial in nature and will be specifically intended for the worship and enjoyment of elect Israel during the Millennium and possibly throughout the eternal ages since the land has been given as an everlasting possession. Some may argue against a literal interpretation of Ezekiel chapters 40-48, saying it is just too incredible and improbable. I choose to take God at His Word and simply believe what is stated. I am sure I do not have a complete understanding of all that is revealed regarding the worship of the Millennial Temple, but I believe it, because God said it.

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## Forum #2

(Continued from page 16) ♦

I will close with an interesting observation made by Arno Gaebelein cited by Dwight D. Pentecost in his book "Things to Come":

"While the sacrifices Israel brought once had a prospective meaning, the sacrifices brought in the millennial temple have a retrospective meaning. When during this age God's people worship in the appointed was at His table, with the bread and wine as the memorial of His love, it is a retrospect. We look back to the Cross. We show forth His death. It is 'till He comes.' Then this memorial feast ends forever. Never again will the Lord's Supper be kept after the Saints of God have left the earth to be with the Lord in glory. The resumed sacrifices will be the memorial of the Cross and the whole wonderful story of the redemption for Israel and the nations of the earth, during the kingdom reign of Christ. And what a memorial it will be! What a meaning those sacrifices will have! They will bring to a living remembrance everything of the past. The retrospect will produce the greatest scene of worship, of praise and adoration this earth has ever seen. All the Cross meant and the Cross has accomplished will be recalled and a mighty 'Hallelujah Chorus' will fill the earth and the heavens. The sacrifices will constantly remind the people of the earth of Him who died for Israel, who paid the redemption price for all creation and whose glory now covers the earth as the waters cover the deep" (pages 525-526).

TOM ROSS

## Not of This World

(Continued from page 11) ♦

reference here. We depend upon God to protect us from the powers of the Devil and the powers of sin; and we also eagerly and faithfully carry on and persevere in the service of God. I believe in these words of the Lord Jesus Christ, we find the concept of "sanctification" set forth. In fact, if we read the succeeding verses, we find this exact concept referred to. **"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth"** (John 17:17-19). There is help for us, as we seek to live separate lives before God! We have the Word of God to teach us, to guide us, to strengthen us. We have the truth found in the Word of God to show us what is right and what is wrong. With the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to live lives that are separate from sin and sinners – even while living in this world which is not our home.

There is a pattern for us to follow. Just as Jesus Christ was sent into this world, even though He was not of this world; in like manner, we are sent into this world, even though we are not of this world. And, just as the Lord Jesus Christ lived in this world, and all the while was separate from sin; even so, we are meant to live in this world, and all the while to be kept from sin. We find, in this passage, not only the concept or principle of sanctification is set forth; but even the manner, method, or means of our sanctification is laid out for us to see in these few words: **"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth"** (John 17:17). Now

we see that the Word of God is our means of sanctification! And, not just our initial salvation; but also our progressive sanctification – our maturity and our successes in the service of God!

### CONCLUSION

So, considering these things I believe we can safely say that one of the major challenges we face today as Christians, is that we are spiritual men and women, who live in a physical world. It is our task and duty; yea, it is our responsibility, to "live in" this world, but not in such a manner as to seem to "be of" this world. The lesson that I am attempting to remind us is simply this: First, we are called out of this world, and our calling and our hope and our faith is pure and holy – far transcending anything that can be found in the realm of mortality and flesh. Therefore, we should live in such a manner as to reflect this holiness and purity. If we want to be useful servants in the spiritual Kingdom of God, then we must not get caught up living as if we are the citizens of this world, or living as people who are accustomed to sin. Second, we are sent into this sinful world because in this sinful world there are others that Christ died for; and they must be found and called out. These others are also destined to be "not of this world." And yet, for now, they are lost and dying in this world. What a wonderful privilege and incredible responsibility is ours! We are "not of this world" but we are sent into this world to bring the Word of God to those who are meant to be saved out of this world.

I pray to God that we all would live our lives in this world, doing what God would have us to do; while all the time, making it plain to everyone around us, that we are "not of this world" at all.

## Another Year and You Are Not Saved!

By C. H. Spurgeon  
(1834 - 1892)

**"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved"**  
(Jeremiah 8:20).



Not saved! Dear reader, is this your mournful plight? Warned of the judgment to come, bidden to escape for your life, and yet at this moment not saved! You know the way of salvation, you read it in the Bible, you hear it from the pulpit, it is explained to you by friends, and yet you neglect it, and therefore you are not saved. You will be without excuse when the Lord shall judge the quick and dead. The Holy Spirit has given more or less of blessing upon the word which has been preached in your hearing, and times of refreshing have come from the divine presence, and yet you are without Christ. All these hopeful seasons have come and gone—your summer and your harvest have past—and yet you are not saved.

Years have followed one another into eternity, and your last year will soon be here: youth has gone, manhood is going, and yet you are not saved. Let me ask you—will you ever be saved? Is there any likelihood of it? Already the most propitious seasons have left you unsaved; will other occasions alter your condition? Means have failed with you—the best of means, used perseveringly and with the utmost affection—what more can be done for you? Affliction and prosperity

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# Another Year and

(Continued from page 17) ♦

have alike failed to impress you; tears and prayers and sermons have been wasted on your barren heart. Are not the probabilities dead against your ever being saved? Is it not more than likely that you will abide as you are till death for ever bars the door of hope? Do you recoil from the supposition? Yet it is a most reasonable one: he who is not washed in so many waters will in all probability go filthy to his end. The convenient time never has come, why should it ever come? It is logical to fear that it never will arrive, and that Felix like, you will find no convenient season till you are in hell. O bethink you of what that hell is, and of the dread probability that you will soon be cast into it!

Reader, suppose you should die unsaved, your doom no words can picture. Write out your dread estate in tears and blood, talk of it with groans and gnashing of teeth: you will be punished with everlasting destruction from the glory of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. A brother's voice would fain startle you into earnestness. O be wise, be wise in time, and ere another year begins, believe in Jesus, who is able to save to the uttermost. Consecrate these last hours to lonely thought, and if deep repentance be bred in you, it will be well; and if it lead to a humble faith in Jesus, it will be best of all. O see to it that this year pass not away, and you an unforgiven spirit. Let not the new year's midnight peals sound upon a joyless spirit! Now, NOW, NOW believe, and live.

**“...Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain...”** (Gen. 19:17).



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# BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

## SOME AMERICAN COLLEGES ARE TEACHING STUDENTS TO 'QUEER' THE BIBLE

(CH)--An increasing number of colleges and universities in the United States are training college students to read the Bible from an LGBT perspective. The details of these courses became public through the Young America Foundation's annual report on the state of college education in America. Spencer Brown, the spokesman for YAF, wrote in his introduction to the Comedy and Tragedy Report that, "Many of the courses and descriptions listed in this year's report may seem comical at first glance, but the situation that continues to unfold on America's campuses is hardly a laughing matter." Several courses listed in the report seem to train students to approach the Bible and Christianity from an LGBT perspective. Swarthmore College offers a course called "Queering God: Feminist and Queer Theology." Pomona College also offers classes on reading the Bible through LGBT lenses. Brown acknowledges that the courses offered at some of the schools sound preposterous, but he also encourages Americans to recognize the intention behind them.

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## ARIZONA MAY PASS RESOLUTION TO DECLARE PORNOGRAPHY A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

(CH)--Republican Representative Michelle Udall, an Arizona lawmaker, introduced a resolution that will declare that pornography is a detriment to society. She stood

before the Arizona House Committee on Health and Human Services on Thursday and asked her colleagues to consider the toxicity of pornography. She also noted there have been 30 peer-reviewed studies on the "negative and detrimental" impacts pornography has on the brain. She mentioned several scientific studies which show the adversarial effects of pornography including one medical study which shows that the consumption of pornography causes "brain shrinkage." The Arizona representative also noted pornography has worked to perpetuate rape culture and the objectification and over-sexualization of women. Udall said, "Pornography is a social toxin that destroys families, damages children, harms women and breeds violence." She continued emphasizing the effects pornography has on young people. "A national representative survey found that 64 percent of young people ages 13 through 24 actively seek out pornography weekly, or more often. One in 10 visitors to pornography websites are age 10 or younger," she added. "Like the tobacco industry, the pornography industry has created a public health crisis. In light of the mounting evidence of harm documented, it is time that society takes action to expose pornography as a public health crisis and protect individuals – especially children – from the damaging effects of pornography," the Republican representative concluded.

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## MAN REGRETS TRANSGENDER SURGERY AND LIFE AS WOMAN, SAYS

## MEDIA 'MISLED' HIM

(CH)--A man who formerly lived as a transgender woman and who had sex-reassignment surgery is speaking up about how he regrets the changes he made. "Had I not been misled by media stories of sex change 'success' and by medical practitioners who said transitioning was the answer to my problems, I wouldn't have suffered as I have," Walt Heyer wrote in a column. "Genetics can't be changed. Feelings, however, can and do change. Underlying issues often drive the desire to escape one's life into another, and they need to be addressed before taking the radical step of transition. You will hear the media say, 'Regret is rare.' But they are not reading my inbox, which is full of messages from transgender individuals who want the life and body back that was taken from them by cross-sex hormones, surgery and living under a new identity," Heyer writes. "After de-transitioning, I know the truth: hormones and surgery may alter appearances, but nothing changes the immutable fact of your sex."

**"So God created man ...male and female created he them"** (Gen. 1:27).

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## NEW AMAZON DOCUMENTARY THEORIZES JESUS IS ACTUALLY A GREEK PHILOSOPHER

(CH)--An Amazon Prime documentary has made claim that Jesus Christ was not a Jew from Nazareth, but rather a Greek philosopher named Apollonius, born in the Anatolia region of Turkey. The theory proposed by "Bible Conspiracies," released in 2016, has drawn attention from several news sources. "What about this person, Jesus? Was he real? Was he created? Was he alien?" asks the film's narrator. "There is, in fact, a man who can be found in text outside of the Bible after the church failed to eradicate him from history," the film claims.

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# Bible & the Newspaper

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Born around the same time as Jesus, Apollonius “became a disciple of Pythagoras renouncing flesh, wine and women. He wore no shoes and let his hair and beard grow long. He soon became a reformer and fixed his abode in the Temple of Aesculapius,” the narrator describes. The film claims that Jesus did not exist, and instead has been mistaken for this philosopher. Like Jesus, Apollonius preached, and supposedly performed miracles and amassed a number of followers. “He reportedly restored life to the dead and spoke of things beyond the human reach. And, unlike Jesus, there is evidence to prove that Apollonius actually existed,” the documentary says. “Nobody can say with any conviction that Jesus was a real person.” One viewer’s criticism states, “The writers of this film not only have NO actual Biblical knowledge, they quote many myths that have been not only been disproved, but are laughed at in theological circles. In this video, there are no experts, no theologians, only many rhetorical lies that are often spewed by evolutionists and atheists.”

**“But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God” (Luke 12:9).**

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## NEARLY HALF OF MILLENNIAL CHRISTIANS BELIEVE EVANGELISM IS WRONG, NEW SURVEY FINDS

(CH)--Nearly half of millennial Christians say that evangelism is wrong, a new study shows. According to Christianity Today, the Barna Group released new findings last week which show that 47 percent of millennial Christians believe it is inappropriate to share their Christian faith with people of a different religion in hopes that they will eventually convert to Christianity. Despite this, Christianity Today reports that the Barna results found that Millennials still believe

they are “good evangelists and still see themselves as representatives for their faith.” David Kinnaman, the Barna president, says that he believes the decline in evangelism is due to the rise in the “cultural expectation against judging personal choices.”

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## DOCTORS COULD BE FORCED TO PERFORM ABORTIONS UNDER ‘EXTREME’ N.M. BILL

(CH)--The New Mexico House of Representatives passed a bill last week that would legalize unrestricted abortion up to the day of birth and would remove “conscience” protections for doctors and hospitals who don’t want to perform abortions.

The bill, HB 51, would repeal a 50-year-old law that predates Roe v. Wade and prohibited abortion except in cases of rape, incest, “grave” mental or physical or mental defects, and to save the mother’s life. The bill passed the Democrat-controlled House, 40-29, and now heads to the Senate, also controlled by Democrats. Democratic Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham supports it. Pro-lifers say the bill has two problems: 1) It mirrors bills in New York and Virginia by removing all restrictions on abortion, and, 2) It rolls back a section of New Mexico law that protected doctors and hospitals. That section of New Mexico law reads: “This article does not require a hospital to admit any patient for the purposes of performing an abortion. ... A person who is a member of, or associated with, the staff of a hospital, or any employee of a hospital ... and who objects to the justified medical termination on moral or religious grounds shall not be required to participate.” The bill would repeal three sections of New Mexico law: 30-5-1, 30-5-2 and 30-5-3. All three sections pertain to abortion. Supporters said the repeal is necessary in case Roe v. Wade and its companion decisions are overturned. “This respects a woman’s personal decision to have an abortion,”

said Rep. Joanne Ferrary, a Democrat and a bill sponsor. Elisa Martinez, executive director of New Mexico Alliance for Life, said the bill is more radical than those in other states. “HB-51 is the most extreme bill in the nation,” Martinez told Fox News, “because it keeps elective abortion-up-to-birth, and also seeks to force medical professionals to participate in this practice by stripping away explicit conscience protections from the current statute.”

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## FEDERAL COURT RULES CHRISTIAN STUDENT GROUP CANNOT BE REMOVED FROM UNIVERSITY FOR BIBLICAL VIEW ON MARRIAGE

(CH)--The University of Iowa cannot remove a Christian student group’s registered status after the group prohibited a gay student from a leadership role, a federal court has ruled. U.S. District Judge Stephanie M. Rose approved a permanent injunction that forces the University of Iowa to reverse its decision and recognize Business Leaders in Christ as a registered student organization. She said in her opinion that the school applies its human rights policy “unevenly.” “The Constitution does not tolerate the way defendants chose to enforce the human rights policy,” she said. “Particularly when free speech is involved, the uneven application of any policy risks the most exacting standard of judicial scrutiny, which the defendants have failed to withstand.” The university had threatened to strip the group of its registered status after the group barred a gay student from taking on a leadership role. The university said that action violated the school’s human rights policy. The group released a statement after the court ruling, saying “universities can’t target religious student groups for being religious.” The group requires leaders to sign a “statement of faith” that says sexual relationships are only between a married husband and wife.

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## ‘FETUS SHALL NOT HAVE INDEPENDENT RIGHTS,’ VERMONT ABORTION BILL DECLARES

(CH)--A bill in the Vermont House that has more than 80 co-sponsors declares that fetuses have no rights and that women who perform their own abortions cannot be prosecuted. Some observers are calling this bill even more radical than the controversial abortion bills in New York and Virginia. The abortion bill in New York was signed into law last month. “Every individual who becomes pregnant has the fundamental right to choose to carry a pregnancy to term, give birth to a child, or to have an abortion,” the bill, H. 57, says. The bill then declares: “A fertilized egg, embryo, or fetus shall not have independent rights under Vermont law.” The New York law did not include such language. It even gives Vermont citizens the right to perform their own abortions. “No State or local law enforcement shall prosecute any individual for inducing, performing, or attempting to induce or perform the individual’s own abortion,” it reads. The bill is known as the Freedom of Choice Act. “This bill proposes to recognize as a fundamental right the freedom of reproductive choice and to prohibit public entities from interfering with or restricting the right of an individual to terminate the individual’s pregnancy,” it reads.

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## DOES NANCY PELOSI’S FAVORITE BIBLE VERSE ACTUALLY APPEAR IN THE BIBLE?

(CH)--House Speaker Nancy Pelosi shared her favorite Bible verse with a group of Christian college and university presidents, but where exactly in the Bible can it be found? Pelosi said, “I can’t find it in the Bible, but I quote it all the time and I keep reading and reading the Bible. I know it’s there someplace. It’s supposed to

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# Bible & the Newspaper

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be in Isaiah." Pelosi then quoted her favorite verse noting that she heard a bishop say it to her once. She said, "To minister to the needs of God's creation is an act of worship. To ignore those needs is to dishonor the God who made us." The House Speaker added, "It's there somewhere in some words or another, but certainly the spirit of it is there."

**"He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor"** (Pro. 14:31).

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## SUPREME COURT FACES MAJOR ABORTION TEST WITH LOUISIANA LAW

(CH)--A Louisiana law set to go into effect next week will be the Supreme Court's first major test on abortion with its new conservative bloc – and it could set the stage for a big pro-life victory. At issue is a new law that requires abortion doctors to have admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles of the clinic. Pro-lifers say the law makes clinics safer for women if complications arise. Pro-choice groups counter that it will limit the number of abortion clinics in the state. The Supreme Court struck down a similar law in 2016 in a case known as *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*. That vote was 5-3, with the court's four liberal justices joining swing voter Anthony Kennedy to form the majority. Justice Antonin Scalia had died several months earlier. But since then, Kennedy has been replaced by new Justice Brett Kavanaugh, and Scalia – who sided with pro-lifers – was replaced by Neil Gorsuch. It is possible that five justices, a majority, would uphold such a law. Pro-choice groups have asked the Supreme Court to block the law, which soon goes into effect.



## From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell  
(1941 - 2002)



## Twin Gifts

**"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake"** (Phil. 1:29).

Believing and suffering are twin gifts of God to His elect people. The order of these is important. Faith precedes suffering, for faith enables us to suffer for Christ. When we become one with Christ by faith we enter into the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil. 3:10).

### THE PEOPLE ADDRESSED

My text begins with the words: **"Unto you..."** The **"you"** is **"all the saints in Christ Jesus"** at Philippi (Phil. 1:1). The church at Philippi had **"bishops and deacons"** (Phil. 1:1). They had faith in Christ and fellowship in the gospel (Phil. 1:5, 25). Chapter 1, verse 28, makes it plain they had salvation from God. In chapter 2, verse 12, they are told to work out this salvation which they had by manifesting it in their lives. In chapter 2, verse 15, they are denominated **"the sons of God."**

These words were not addressed here to the unconverted. They do not concern unbelievers. Paul is speaking here to real Christians who have obeyed the gospel. They are people who are striving and struggling to live the life of faith (Phil. 1:27-28).

### THE GIFTS OF GOD

The text continues: **"Unto you it is given. . ."** The Greek here could read "it has been granted as a favor" (See *JFB Bible Com.* p. 1304). John Albert Bengel says it means: "God bestowed it of grace"

(Vol. II, p. 430).

*The New Bible Commentary*

tells us: "The verb *granted* conveys the thought of a gift of grace: 'to you has the privilege been freely given'" Albert Barnes says it means that "God concedes to you the privilege or advantage" (Eph.-Col., p. 161). B. C. Caffin says it means "a free spontaneous act of Divine bounty": (*The Pulpit Com.*, Vol. XX, p. 7). The Greek word for "given" (*charizomai*) is translated **"freely given"** in Romans 8:32 and I Corinthians 2:12.

Since man is a totally depraved sinner, God must freely give him all things when it comes to spiritual benefits. All of these gifts proceed from grace in the heart of God. Hence we read in the Scriptures of **"the grace that is given to us"** (Rom. 12:6; 15:15; I Cor. 3:10; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 3:7; 4:7). Grace was given us in our Covenant Head **"before the world began"** (II Tim. 1:9). In time those given grace in Christ in eternity past are given the Spirit: **"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"** (Eph. 1:17). **"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit"** (I John 4:13). This Spirit of life gives to the covenant people eternal life: **"...but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"** (Rom. 6:23). Since the Spirit applies the benefits

of Christ's redemption, at times Christ is said to give eternal life: **"And I give unto them eternal life"** (John 10:28; cf. 17:2). All these gifts from God are without repentance (Rom. 11:29).

### ON BEHALF OF CHRIST

Both faith and suffering are given us **"on behalf of Christ."** The Greek word translated **"on behalf of"** can also mean "for Christ's sake." "In behalf of" in English means "in the interest of." This expression reminds us of Ephesians 4:32: **"...even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."** These twin things are given us on behalf of Christ's sufferings and death. Because He shed His precious blood, we are given the privilege of believing on Christ for salvation and of suffering for our faith in Christ.

### FAITH THE GIFT OF GOD

In my text faith is presented as a God-given ability bestowed on us **"on behalf of Christ."** His atoning blood purchased for us, not merely salvation, but also the means to it. This is why in I Peter 1:21 it says of Christ: **"Who by him do believe in God."** Kenneth Wuest renders it: "Who through Him are believers in God." James Moffatt put it: "It is by Him that you believe in God."

Arminians view faith as a natural ability of man. They believe that every man has been given enough spiritual light to believe in Christ by his own free will. They do not see faith as a God-given ability which flows only to the elect through the atonement of Christ. Arminians believe that faith makes up what is lacking in the atonement of Christ. Thus they make faith the meritorious cause of man's actual salvation. They say man has enough spiritual light to believe or reject Christ at his own pleasure.

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# Twin Gifts

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Curtis Hutson has written: "All men are drawn to Christ, but not all men will trust Christ as Saviour. Every man will make his own decision to trust Christ or to reject Him. The Bible makes it clear that all men have light" (*Why I Disagree with All Five Points of Calvinism*, p. 6).

Now hear the late John R. Rice: "Oh, dear sinner, if you read this, remember, you are commanded to repent and you can repent" (*The Path of Life*, Canada, p. 6).

The issue between sovereign gracers and Arminian heretics is plain for all to see. According to them, a man can repent and believe of his own ability when he is willing to do so. Every man has the ability to make his own decision. He needs not the power of God to bring him to faith in Christ. We sovereign gracers contend that faith is not a natural ability, but a God-given ability which flows from the shed blood of Christ.

No where in all the Bible is saving faith said to be a natural ability common to all men without exception. Instead we read in the Bible: "**For all men have not faith**" (II Thess. 3:2). This verse lays the ax to the Arminian heresy that each man has enough of the common grace of God to believe the gospel by his free will. Not all men believe the gospel when it is preached to them: "**But they have not all obeyed the gospel**" (Rom. 10:16). "**And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not**" (Acts 28:24). Since millions die blaspheming God and never exercise saving faith it is certainly correct when the Bible says: "**For all men have not faith**" (II Thess. 3:2).

The Arminian assumes that

responsibility equals ability. This idea is both illogical and unscriptural. I say it is illogical because I may go borrow money at the bank, and then, due to financial reverse, be unable to repay it. I am responsible to pay the debt, but I am unable to do it. Thus responsibility and ability are not equal.

I say it is unscriptural because God commands us to do some things which we do not have the ability to do. Consider Matthew 5:48 which commands us: "**Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.**" Does it follow that because we are commanded to be as perfect as God is that this proves we have the natural ability to do so? No! In I Peter 1:16 we are commanded: "**Be ye holy; for I am holy.**" Does this mean we can be as holy as the Lord because we are commanded to be so? Hardly, for I Samuel 2:2 says: "**There is none holy as the LORD.**" So again responsibility does not always equal ability.

The Bible teaches Christ is the Beginner and Finisher of our faith: "**Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...**" (Heb. 12:2). The margin has "**beginner**" as a possible rendering of the Greek word translated "**author.**" Christ is the efficient cause of faith. This must be so, for all men by nature are void of saving faith. Man cannot believe of himself. The Greek word rendered "**author**" (*archegos*) "signifies in general captain or leader, or the first inventor of a thing" (*Adam Clark's Com.* p. 1280). Christ is the Beginner of our faith. He increases it (Luke 17:5) and strengthens it (Luke 22:32). Christ also is the Finisher or Perfector of our faith. So when it comes to saving faith Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginner and the Ender (Phil.

1:6).

## FAITH DEFINED

The best definition of faith is found in Hebrews 11:1: "**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**" Faith makes future hopes a present reality. Faith sees the invisible. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6).

Saving faith in Christ is belief in His death, burial, and resurrection: "**Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand. By which ye are saved, if ye received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures**" (I Cor. 15:1-4).

## THE POWER OF GOD PRODUCES FAITH

It takes as much an exertion of the power of God to produce faith in an individual as it did to raise Christ from the dead: "**And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places**" (Eph. 1:19-20). The words "**who believe according to the working of his mighty power**" can never be made to fit modern decisional regeneration. Colossians 2:12 speaks of "**the faith of the operation of God,**" showing saving faith is produced by the

energy of God. The disposition to believe is from God: "**This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent**" (John 6:29).

## THE MEANS OF FAITH

The Holy Spirit is the efficient cause of faith: "**To another faith by the same Spirit. . .**" (I Cor. 12:9). This is why "**faith**" is called a fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22. No where in the New Testament is faith called a work of the flesh.

The instrumental means of faith is the written Word of God: "**So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God**" (Rom. 10:17). Peter told the Jerusalem church: "**Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe**" (Acts 15:7; cf. John 17:20). To the Ephesians Paul declared: "**In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. . .**" (Eph. 1:13). Those the Spirit sanctifies He also brings to belief of the truth (II Thess. 2:13-14).

Faith is the fruit of election: "**. . . and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed**" (Acts 13:48). This statement can mean no less than that a divine ordination to eternal life is the cause, not the effect, of any man's believing the gospel. Election is the foundation from which faith flows. Men are not elected because of foreseen faith, but they believe because they were elected by God. Jesus said: "**But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you**" (John 10:26). It is plain from these words that faith has not been granted to the goats. A man does not believe in order to become a sheep, he

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# Twin Gifts

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believes because he is a sheep. Hence we read of **“the faith of God’s elect”** (Tit. 1:1).

Second, saving faith is the evidence of regeneration: **“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. . .”** (I John 5:1). Jay P. Green, Sr., in a *Literal Translation of the Bible*, has this verse: “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God” (p. 992). J. B. Rotherham gives it the sense of “hath been born” (p. 248). A. T. Robertson quotes the Law as saying: “The Divine Begetting is the antecedent, not the consequent of the believing” (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. VI, p. 237). But this truth must not be taken too far, for the person in I John 5:1 is a believer. I do not find in Scriptures such a thing as a regenerated unbeliever. In our personal experience we are said to **“believe on him to life everlasting”** (I Tim. 1:16).

## FRUITS OF FAITH

The very first fruit of faith is confession: **“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”** (Rom. 10:9-10). A real believer in Jesus Christ will make a hearty confession of his faith in Christ before the church and the world. He will tell everyone Christ is his Lord and Savior.

Second, faith will lead to baptism: **“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”** (Mark 16:16). In these words baptism is put for the

external sign of the inner faith of the heart. There is a connection between baptism and faith. Water baptism is the public profession of one’s faith in Jesus Christ to be his Lord and Savior.

## SUFFERING A GIFT FROM GOD

Some seem to want faith without the suffering which must follow. This cannot be. Faith and suffering go together. II Timothy 3:12 says: **“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”** On Christ we believe and for Christ we suffer. Suffering for Christ proves we have real faith in Christ. The Bible speaks of **“the trial of your faith”** (I Pet. 1:7). Faith brings us into oneness with Christ, and also with the fierceness of His opposition among men. Those who are brought to know Christ enter into **“the fellowship of his sufferings”** (Phil. 3:10). Jesus said: **“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you”** (John 15:18). Hypocrites do not live godly nor do they experience sufferings for Christ.

Job’s faith was sorely tried, yet it remained strong. In the midst of all of his trials he declared: **“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him”** (Job 13:15).

Suffering for Jesus Christ is a God-given privilege: **“And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name”** (Acts 5:41). To be abused for the name of Christ is a high and holy privilege. Suffering follows faith and is a sign of God’s favor. It is an evidence of His salvation.

Our Redeemer suffered and died **“once for all”** (Heb. 10:10). He is not crucified afresh each time some church celebrates a mass. While Christ shall never suffer in His fleshly body again, He

does suffer in His figurative body, the church. **“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church”** (Col. 1:24). Today Christ suffers in church members who make up His mystical body (Eph. 5:30-32). Christ identifies Himself with His people: **“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me”** (Matt. 25:40; cf. Acts 9:4). He feels our sufferings (Heb. 4:15).

When we suffer for Christ’s sake, for the sake of His gospel and the profession of His name, we resemble our suffering Savior. Such suffering is the evidence we are joined to Christ by faith. **“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf”** (I Pet. 4:14-16).

In the days of Queen Mary an imprisoned Christian wrote to another prisoner: “A prisoner for Christ! What is this for a poor worm! Such honor have not all saints. Both the degrees I took at the University have not set me so high as the honor of becoming a prisoner of the Lord.”

Latimer, after the sentence was pronounced on him, cried out, “I thank God most heartily for this honor.” Saunders said, “I am the unmeetest man for this high office that ever was appointed to it.” “Such an honor it is,” said Careless, the martyr, “as the greatest angel

in Heaven is not permitted to have. God forgive me; mine unthankfulness” (see John Trapp on Phil. 1:29).

## SUFFERING HAS ITS REWARD

First, sufferings guarantee consolation: **“And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings so shall ye be also of the consolation”** (II Cor. 1:7). Present abuse for the sake of Christ is a pledge of that fullness of joy which we shall enjoy for ever more. Suffering does not weaken our faith, but it increases our consolation.

Second, these troubles and trials are limited: **“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you”** (I Pet. 5:10). Our adversities are short in comparison to eternity. “A while” has the sense of “a little while.” Paul said: **“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”** (II Cor. 4:17). God permits us to suffer when it will **“strengthen”** and **“settle”** us in the Christian life.

Third, the reward for enduring trials for Christ is greater than the sufferings we experience: **“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us”** (Rom. 8:18). **“But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy”** (I Pet. 4:13).

Fourth, those who suffer for Christ’s sake shall share in His glory: **“If we suffer, we shall**

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# Twin Gifts

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**also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us**" (II Tim. 2:12). Those believers who are now suffering for Christ shall soon rule and reign with Him over this earth as kings and priests (Rev. 1:5-6; 5:9-10). Revelation 20:6 says: **"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years"** (Rev. 20:6).

## CONCLUSION

1. The Christian life is a life of faith and suffering. These are twin gifts of Heaven's charity. Those who experience both are highly honored by God.

2. Faith must come first, but suffering must follow, or there is no proof that one has the faith of God's elect.

3. Do you have these twin gifts? Do you have the faith of God's elect? Do you suffer as a Christian in the wicked world?



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## Jesus Glorified, and the Sinner Encouraged

By James Smith  
(1802 - 1862)

**"Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified"** (John 12:23).

Sinners seldom think aright

in reference to themselves, their God, or their Saviour. When a man begins to feel his true state, and to see his real condition, he immediately begins to think that there is no mercy for him, and he fancies that Jesus will not receive him. It never enters into his mind, that Jesus receives none but such characters as he discovers himself to be; or that Jesus can be glorified in his salvation, and is well-pleased to see him weep and pray. But such is the case. A few Gentile sinners desired to see Jesus; Philip and Andrew tell Him so, and He immediately replies, **"Now is the Son of man glorified."** If language means anything, this expression of Jesus means that the coming sinner glorifies Him. He loves to save sinners; it is not only His work, but His delight; no one was ever half so much pleased with His employment as Jesus is; it just suits His nature, gratifies His tender loving heart, and increases His pure and holy joy. He is glorified when poor souls come to Him as sinners, having nothing to plead but His Word; nothing to appeal to but His mercy; nothing to present, but their lost and ruined persons. When they come with ardent desires, crying, **"Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me:"** desires which none can satisfy but Himself; desires which nothing will meet, but a full and free salvation.

Jesus is glorified, when we come to Him as a Saviour; to be saved from sin, wrath, and death, by his obedience, blood-shedding, and intercession. When we come to Him as the great Teacher sent from God, to be taught to know, believe, and do the truth. When we come to Him as Physician, to be healed of the disease of sin, and prepared to glorify God in our body, soul, and spirit, which are His. We glorify Him, not by

doubting His power, willingness, or tender love; but by believing His invitation and faithful promises. He is not glorified by our slavish fears, unfounded suspicions, or guilty shyness; but by our hope in His mercy, our earnest prayer, our steady reliance, our confidence in His Word, and our humility before His throne. And when we have found mercy and enjoy peace. He is glorified by our grateful love, fervent zeal, prompt obedience, and diligence in spreading His fame.

The hour is come, and Jesus is glorified, when many come together: when great sinners come: when they come who have long delayed, and wickedly refused to come before. He is also glorified when the coming sinner receives His pardon, feels in himself that he is healed, opens his mouth in praise, runs in the way of His commandments, fixes his streaming eyes on the cross, and devotes his entire person to His service. The salvation of the sinner glorifies the blood which procured his pardon, the righteousness which justifies him from all things, the grace which sanctifies his nature, and the mercy which pitied him in his lost condition.

Reader, what encouragement is given thee to come to Jesus! Do you not see, that in coming you not only obtain an eternal salvation for yourself, but you please, delight, and glorify the Saviour also? Are you discouraged? Think of this. Believe this, and thy fears will flee, thy doubts must depart, and confidence and peace succeed. Have you never come to Jesus? Do you not need salvation? Can you obtain it without an application to Him? You cannot. Without Him you perish, and perish for ever. Come to Him, and

you live. Stay away from Him, and you die in your sins. Come then to Jesus. Come at once. Approach Him, for His throne is before thee, His eye is upon thee, the word of salvation is sent to thee, His hand is stretched out to receive thee, and when you fall at His feet and cry from the heart, "Jesus, save me, save me by thy grace, save me to thy glory, save me for thy mercy's sake!" then He will say, **"The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified"** in the salvation of this sinner."

Believer, was it not a happy hour, when we first came to Jesus, and found Him faithful to His Word? Does it not cause thy bosom to glow with gladness, to think that Jesus can be, and is glorified in thy salvation? What a source of consolation is this-- Jesus is glorified in saving me! Jesus was glorified when I came and fell before Him, feeling that I was not worthy to look up to His throne, or speak one word in His presence; when I cried for mercy at His hands, and found Him gracious, kind, and true. And Oh! delightful thought, Jesus will be glorified in my salvation throughout eternity! Oh, the pleasure He will feel when the myriads of His redeemed surround Him and ascribe all their salvation unto Him!

*Trembling sinner, cease thy doubting,---*

*Look to Christ, the sinner's friend;*

*He is now thy soul inviting,---*

*To His precious words attend:*

*Come, poor sinner,---*

*Come to me, the sinner's Friend,*

*I am ready to receive you;*

*I will peace and pardon send;*

*Come to me,---I will relieve you,*

*On my faithful word depend:*

*Come, poor sinner,---*

*Come to me, the sinner's Friend.*





## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Grace Landmark Baptist Church of Buckhannon, WV, is seeking a pastor. The church is Sovereign Grace and Landmark in doctrine and practice. Any interested called pastor of like faith may contact Brother Brad Butcher at (304) 669-4738 or (304) 745-6226.

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The Stephens Branch Baptist Church of Martin, Kentucky is in need of a pastor. They are an Independent, Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Missionary Baptist church holding to the doctrines of grace and the King James Bible. If you are interested in being considered or would like more information on the church you can call Brother Lonnie Edwards at (859) 629-1413 or write the church at: Stephens Branch Baptist Church, 1025 Stephens Branch Road, Martin, Kentucky 41649.

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The Philadelphia Baptist Church of Decatur, Alabama is seeking the Lord's guidance in calling His eternally appointed man to fill the vacancy left when He called His faithful servant Elder Wm. Doyal Thomas unto his everlasting home September 29, 2018.

If any brother of like faith and

order would like to be considered for that pastorate or would like information on the church please call or text Brother Mike Gibson at (256) 303-7747 or email Brother James Reynolds at admin@pbcofdecaturalabama.org. or text (ONLY) 931-452-1158.

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The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, Mississippi is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact (662) 282-7794 or Email: request@bereabaptistchurch.org.

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The Lord's Baptist Church in Tacoma Washington is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact Gaylen Russell at 360-879-5565 (home) or 253-495-4567 (cell) or by Email: gaylenr@rainierconnect.com.

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The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact the church in writing at SGBC, 400 N. Main St., Caldwell, KS 67022, or by phone Brother Darin Wiley 620-863-2431.

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The Victory Baptist Church of Chehalis, Washington is in need of a pastor. Any interested brother may call Gerry Greisen at (360) 985-7975, or Mark Fenison at (360) 751-2929.



## On the Excellency of the Word of God



The Word of God to man's a precious thing,  
 The Word of God to man good news doth bring.  
 The Word of God is mercy from above;  
 The Word of God's a token of His love.  
 The Word of God is gracious news from heaven,  
 The Word of God shows how we are forgiven.  
 The Word of God great comfort doth impart.  
 The Word of God can heal a broken heart.  
 The Word of God is music to our ears,  
 The Word of God can banish all our fears.  
 The Word of God is a bright shining light,  
 The Word of God illumines affliction's night.  
 The Word of God's a cordial to the soul,  
 The Word of God makes broken spirits whole.  
 The Word of God does consolation bring,  
 The Word of God can blunt death's sharpest sting.  
 The Word of God is a great consolation,  
 The Word of God shows Christ is our salvation.  
 The Word of God will guide our souls to bliss,  
 Where Jesus Christ our blessed Savior is.  
 Oh! may this blessed Word be our delight,  
 Our meditation, morning, noon, and night;  
 It will refresh and cheer us on the road,  
 Till we arrive at home, our Heavenly abode.

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