

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 Hidden Gospel

Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

"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" (II Cor. 4:3-4).

There is a cluster of spiritual truths to be found in these words of the Apostle Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians. I shall



do my best to glean as many themes from this verse as the Spirit enables me to see.

THE GOSPEL

The towering topic in my text is the gospel of Christ. Here Paul calls it **"our gospel"** (v. 3). In Romans 2:16 he called it **"my gospel"** (cf. II Tim. 2:8). He did not mean that the gospel

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Shouldest Thou Help the Ungodly?

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem. And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD" (II Chron. 19:1-2).

The question that Jehu posed to King Jehoshaphat was a valid one. Though King Jehoshaphat was one of the best and ablest kings of Judah; he appears to have had a



fault in that he sought to ally himself with the northern kingdom of Israel. I believe Jehoshaphat thought he

could be a good influence on the kings and people of apostate Israel. Therefore, he spent some time with their kings, and he spent some time in their lands, and he even spent some time going to war as an ally of Israel. However, we find that the Lord does not approve of this behavior

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Joy Cometh in the Morning

By Joseph M. Sidders
of Guntown, Mississippi

I think the psalmist put it best in Psalms 30:4-5, **"Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."** Oh, that precious joy that awaits us in the morning, and here the writer is giving attention to our blessed



opportunity to **"sing"** and **"give thanks"** through prayer in remembrance of Him.

"And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When

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Is the Wuhan Corona Virus in the Bible?

By Matthew Stepp
of Wayne, West Virginia

Yes, it is! **"And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows"** (Matt. 24:6-8). It is prophesied by none other than Jesus Christ, Himself, that the latter days will have pestilences and area-wide



diseases that will cause folks to be fearful and sorrowful. The latter days is the period of time following Christ's

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into glory until He once again reappears in the clouds at the glorious rapture of the saints, which could occur any day now. Even more so, since we are seeing again the validity of the reoccurring signs of these latter days. Pestilences are the fourth of

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

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

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WCNA, Myrtle, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	95.9	3,000 FM
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KARL, Blaine, WA	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m.	550	5,000 AM

The Hidden Gospel

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was about him. Rather, he called it his gospel in the sense that he is a messenger of it to others. The gospel as preached was not of man at all, but he received it by revelation from Heaven (Gal. 1:11-12). It was in accordance with divinely given Old Testament Scriptures (I Cor. 15:1-4). The gospel Paul and his companions preached was the true gospel, and in no sense a spurious one (Gal. 1:6).

The word gospel (*euangelion*) literally means "the good news" or "glad tidings" (Luke 2:10). Good news was fully appreciated in the first century when all good news of the day had to be carried by couriers. Our English word "gospel" means "the message concerning Christ and deliverance by Him." This is why Paul referred to it as "the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 1:16; 15:19; I Cor. 9:18; II Cor. 9:13; Gal. 1:7). The gospel is the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins and sonship with God restored through Christ. It concerns remission of sins and reconciliation with God. Hence it is called "the gospel of God" (Rom. 1:1) and "the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). Seeing it concerns the peace that Christ made by the blood of His cross it is denominated "the gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:15). As its reception brings salvation it is styled "the gospel of your salvation" (Eph. 1:13).

There is a difference between the law and the gospel. The law is God's command, directing us what to do and not to do. It requires of us obedience and works. The gospel is the offer of forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation based on the

death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The gospel does not require any good works on our part. It only requires us to receive the finished work of Jesus Christ in our behalf. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

THE GOSPEL IS LIGHT

A second truth in my text is that the gospel is like a light: ". . . the light of the glorious gospel" and "should shine unto them." "Light" in the Greek is *photismos* from *photizo* which means "to shed rays, to shine, or to brighten up; to enlighten or illuminate." The word signifies the brightness emitted by a radiant body. The gospel originated with God who is "the Father of lights" (Jas. 1:17). Its message is about Christ who is "the light of the world" (John 8:12). Wherever the gospel is preached and received it is written: "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up" (Matt. 4:16).

The gospel is styled "light" because it is preached to those born into the kingdom of darkness (Matt. 12:26; Luke 11:34; Col. 1:13). By nature man is ignorant of Christ the Light of Life. He is in the darkness of sin (John 3:19) and misery (Isa. 8:22). He is in double darkness as he has no light and no sight. He goes from day to day performing the "works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11) in obedience to the Prince of Darkness (Eph. 2:1-3). Unless the light of the gospel of Christ shines unto him, he will be cast into outer darkness (Matt. 25:30; Jude 13).

When God blesses gospel preaching He makes the light to shine out of darkness, and He causes it to shine in the

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PONDERING THE TIME



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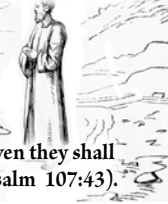
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Light Contemplations

By Luke Austin
of Cadillac, Michigan

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



AN UNDENIABLE TRUTH

"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth" (Col. 1:5-6).

There is one undeniable truth that permeates the pages of Scripture. Those that have come into contact with Jesus Christ leave changed. I do not care what church you attend, what doctrine you hold to, or how right or wrong that doctrine may or may not be when examined by the light of the Scriptures. If you have not come into contact with the Son of God and have been washed in His blood, forgiven of your sins, and live from that day changed, you are still lost.

Read the Scripture above, Paul writes to the church at Colosse and says to them since the day you heard of it referring back to the Gospel. I say this with love in my heart, with a desire for your salvation, not to beat a war drum or try to ascend to some religious superiority. The idea that someone is saved because of goodness, religious works, or giving a heart that is not theirs to give cannot save.

Only Jesus and faith in His finished work on the cross, His death, burial, and resurrection the third day can save. Do you have a day? A day when you know

He saved you. Was there a day of dramatic transformation? A day when you heard the Gospel in a way that it communicated peace to your sin weary soul? Or, was it a day where you became religious, or joined a church, or did some "churchy" thing?

THE WRONG PROPHECY

As free speech is censored, and liberties are on the cusp of being taken away, many are focusing on the wrong prophecies. While America draws her last breaths and that tell-tale death rattle in her throat sounds, people are worrying about the Antichrist, Armageddon, The Tribulation, and other end-time prophecies. (A disclaimer; biblical prophecies go beyond American current events, but that is a subject for another time.)

Now your eschatology may or may not have a rapture or tribulation. It may or may not have an actual "man of sin" or antichrist. The focus is not proper eschatology; it is proper concern for the right biblical prophecy. There is one biblical prophecy that should concern a large majority of Christendom more than an antichrist or tribulation.

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22-

23).

Find yourself on the wrong side of this prophecy, and all other Bible events will pale in comparison. **"Many"** will say to me on that day. Many means just that, many. More than half. The majority. The lion share. A lot. I think the larger portion will be found here in the many based on the contrast of a previous verse. Also take note and be warned, what are they calling Him? **"Lord, Lord."** These are not atheists or Buddhists or Muslims. These are professing Christians. Only they would call Him Lord and try to say they did many wonderful works "in His name."

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

"Few" there be that find it. Few means just that, few. Less than. Not as many. Not the majority. Less than half.

You can be wrong about the antichrist. You can be wrong about end time events. You can be wrong about Armageddon. You can have the most atrocious eschatology and still find yourself in Heaven. Why? Because you repented of your sins and trusted in the finished work of Christ. But get this one wrong and there is no way. Without being the few there be that find it you will in no wise enter into the kingdom of God.

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



The Hidden Gospel

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sinner's heart: **"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 4:6).** The same

God who made the light to shine in a creative way (Gen. 1:2-3) makes it to shine in our hearts in a redemptive way. As the gospel shines in a man's heart, he sees the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It pleases the Lord to use the preaching of the gospel in giving light to sin-darkened souls. Those who embrace the gospel become light in the Lord, and then they give light to others. The gospel is hid to one class of people (Rom. 11:7), but God has opened the eyes of another class to see in it the glory of Christ.

The words **"should shine unto them"** might be rendered "should dawn upon them" or "that they should not see the illumination." The gospel is ineffectual to some who hear it, but to others God caused the light to shine into their hearts. A new day dawned in their souls, and they have the light of life. These became **"the children of light"** (I Thess. 5:5). God calls them **"out of darkness into his marvelous light"** (I Pet. 2:9). To these God gives **"the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"** (II Cor. 4:6). May God pity those upon whom the light of the gospel has never dawned.

THE GOSPEL SETS FORTH THE GLORY OF CHRIST

Ponder long the words **"the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God."** A better rendering might be "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ." "Glory" is not an attribute of the gospel, but of Christ. The glory of Christ is the subject of the glad tidings. The glory of Christ is the sum of all the divine and human excellencies which are centered in Him. To see His glory in the gospel is to be saved, and then that same person is progressively changed into his likeness from

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one stage of spiritual growth to another (II Cor. 3:18).

Some would pervert the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:7). Instead of declaring the finished work of Calvary, they say man must add his part to the gospel. To some this is a meritorious faith, or signing a decision card, or being baptized into some church, or doing the best you can. All such preachers are false prophets, for they fail to set forth the glory of the person of Christ. Any thing which men call a gospel that takes away from the glorious finished work of Christ is **"another gospel,"** and those who preach such a Christ-dishonoring message are under the curse of God (Gal. 1:6-9).

The true gospel declares the divinity of Jesus Christ. It says that He is **"the image of God."** Being God, He represents God. Those who have seen Him have seen the Father. Christ told Philip: **"...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father"** (John 14:9). Christ in His divine nature is **"the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person"** (Heb. 1:3). He is in the form of God and equal with God (Phil. 2:6). In Colossians 1:15 Paul says that Christ **"is the image of the invisible God."** Those who have a message that denies the absolute divinity of Christ like the false cults, are preaching **"another Jesus"** (II Cor. 11:4). Their so-called gospel does not present Christ as **"the image of God."**

THE GOSPEL IS HID TO SOME

The Apostle Paul said that his gospel was **"hid to them that are lost"** (v. 3). Some would render it: "It is veiled to those that are perishing." In I Corinthians

1:18 Paul said that the gospel is foolishness to them that perish. The veil is not over the gospel, but it is over the depraved heart of the sinner (II Cor. 3:14). Men unto whom the gospel does not shine are lost. They are in a state of perdition, and if they continue to reject the gospel they shall perish forever.

In a very charitable manner some have assumed that God saves a good many of the elect without the gospel, or maybe even all His elect. This view conveniently relieves them of any responsibility to preach the gospel at home or abroad. If God could save one of the elect without the gospel, He could save all. Then there would be no need for anyone to preach the gospel to the lost. If God can save the heathen without the gospel, He can save people in America without the gospel. Therefore, we should close our doors at church and send all preachers to the cotton patch and the corn field.

Men may invent and propagate their religious theories and justify their laziness with such heresy. Nevertheless, the Bible declares in my text that without the light of the gospel of Christ's glory men perish. It equally implies that there are others who have the gospel light to shine in their hearts and are saved. What is the difference between the saved and the lost? A saved person sees the Divine Christ by the light of the gospel; the gospel is hid to the unbeliever. Men are obligated to obey or believe the gospel (Rom. 10:16). Peter asked the question: **"...what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"** (I Pet. 4:17). Paul answers Peter's question in II Thessalonians 1:8-9. Speaking of those **"that obey not the gospel,"** he writes: **"Who shall**

be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Some say a great multitude will be in Heaven who never obeyed the gospel. The Bible says that those who obey not the gospel will burn in Hell.

Those to whom the gospel is hid are also said to be **"them that believe not"** (v. 4). Those who have the gospel veiled to them and those who believe not are one and the same class. You cannot be an atheist, and yet be saved. A person cannot reject the gospel and go to Heaven when he dies. Christ commissioned His church: **"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"** (Mark 16:15-16). It is plain from these words of Christ that those who do not believe the preached gospel **"shall be damned"** (Rev. 21:8). The grotesque creature invented by some who is saved without faith in the preached gospel is not found in the Bible, but in the third chapter of the book of imagination.

THE GOSPEL HID BY THE DEVIL

Who would dare to do such a dastardly deed as hide the light of the gospel? Paul answers: **"...the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ...should shine unto them."** Who is **"the god of this world"**? I believe that the Devil is meant. The god of this age is the Devil who usurps the place of God in the lives of men. The Evil One holds a certain sway over the world in this present age. This is in a very limited sense, for God alone is **"the King of the ages"** (I Tim. 1:17; Rev. 15:3

Greek text). Christ called Satan **"the prince of this world"** (John 12:31; 14:30). In Ephesians 2:2 Paul titled him **"the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."**

Satan is not a principle, but a personality which has access to human souls. His dominion is immense, seeing he is **"the god of this world."** I John 5:19 declares that **"the whole world lieth in the evil one"** (Greek text). Satan vainly seeks to set himself up as God: **"I will be like the most High"** (Isa. 14:14). When he possesses the body of the final Antichrist **"he as God"** will sit **"in the temple, shewing himself that he is God"** (II Thess. 2:4; cf. Rev. 13:4).

Why is Satan called **"the god of this age"**? The Bible speaks of **"this age"** (I Cor. 1:20; 2:6,8; 3:18; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 1:21), and **"this present age"** (I Tim. 6:7; II Tim. 4:10; Tit. 2:12). It also speaks of **"this present season"** (Rom. 3:26; 8:18; 11:5), and **"the course of this age"** (Eph. 2:2). But it also mentions **"the age to come"** (Eph. 1:21; Heb. 6:5). At times this period is called **"that age"** (Luke 20:35) as opposed to **"this present evil age"** (Gal. 1:4). Our King James Version has the word "world" in these verses, but it is clearly "age" in the Greek text. Satan in this present age is the god of millions. In the millennial age to come he will be bound in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-3), and Christ shall be the only God of the nations. Zechariah says: **"In that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one"** (Zech. 14:9; cf. Isa. 66:23).

Is the Devil a real God? NO! Satan is a creature and not a God to be served. A false god is no-god: **"For all the gods of the**

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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).

PRINCIPLE DESIGN

What do you think would be the principle design of the life of a Christian? John Owen, in his preface to *The Glory of Christ* wrote that it is to acquaint themselves with Christ, to trust Christ, to love and honor Christ, and to endeavor after conformity to Christ. "In these things," Owen wrote, "consist the soul, life, power, beauty, and efficacy of the Christian religion; without which...it is a useless, lifeless carcass." This is actually a summary of Paul's statement in Philippians 3:8-12. Paul counted all his worldly attainments as loss that he might know Christ. I very much doubt a majority of people would count acquainting themselves with Christ a high priority, let alone a defining purpose of life. Everything else would fall by the wayside and be worthless compared to being acquainted with Christ and all efforts and all costs to obtain it would be small by comparison. To know Christ is to truly know Him intimately and personally. Not to know about Him, but to love Him. Yet while He is not here physically, the Spirit of God illuminates the eyes of faith, through His Word, that He speaks to us, comforts us, communes with us. He is present in the darkest trial, He is there in our greatest sorrow. He is there in the times of peace and rest when all is well.

I know Jesus. He saved me from my sins. I know Him as a redeemer, His blood has washed me clean. I know Him as Lord, the

shepherd of my soul. I know Him as king in the beauty of holiness. I know Him as the water of life that satisfies and the bread from Heaven that endures to eternal life. It is through Scripture that we grow in love towards Him.

To know Christ is to want to be like Christ. To know Christ is to love Him. To love Him is to follow Him. Paul loved Christ and wanted nothing more than to learn of Him, to follow Him wherever that may lead. His life belonged to Christ and He desired that life to be conformed in every way to be more like Jesus. Even in suffering, Paul saw it as a way to follow in His Master's steps. Paul was not perfect. He was nowhere near where he desired to be spiritually. He desired Christ, that calling of holiness, the hope of eternal life. So Paul had his gaze fixed on Christ and pressed on following Him, and calls us to do the same.

Is Jesus precious to you? Is Jesus the principle design of your life and do you long to know Him and be like Him? Can you see, with eyes of faith, the sinless lamb of God, covered in blood, dying for your sins, crying out "**My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**" and not be moved? If Jesus is not precious to you, then you have a religion without power and life.

WORDS OF A MOTHER

King Lemuel's mom was a wise woman (Prov. 31:1-9). We do not know who she was (or her son for that matter), but her words of

wisdom live on. The Hebrew word translated prophesy in verse one is "a burden" and when it refers to a prophetic word, it is a burden of the heart (cf. Nah. 1:1; Hab. 1:1; Zech. 9:1; Mal. 1:1). Her burden was the instruction she had for her son. A burden that could only be lifted by getting it out of her head and into Lemuel's. The Lord burdened her heart and it would have crushed her unless she spoke. She was a wise woman because she told her son what he needed to hear. I am sure his mother told him a great many things. She probably told him about how to behave in public, how to dress, and how to wash his face. But she also had important conversations with her son. She was wise because she taught her son truth.

She reminded Lemuel what she endured to bring him in the world, carrying him in her womb those many months. The morning sickness, the sleepless nights, the labor pains. He was the son of her vows, the son she longed for, prayed for. The son God had given her and she did not take that lightly. This was not merely guilt manipulation, but a reminder of her authority and love for her son.

Proverbs 31:1-9 are the words his mother told him, and when the king took power, his mind returned to those lessons of his youth. Mothers have a lot of power. That is why the government wants your kids in their control as early as possible. Proverbs 22:6 is a warning and a promise. There is a right way and a wrong way to train up a child, and most of the time, that training will stick, for good or ill. "**Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it**" (Prov. 22:6). Lemuel had a mother that shaped her son's mind in truth, and when he was old, he did not

forget. She prepared him for his future personal life and future employment as king. "**It is not for kings**" to drink. That is not how kings act. The dying and sick may relieve his pain, the downcast can relieve his mind, but the king has no such luxury. It may be an acceptable way for others, but not for you. She encourages him to do right. He needs to speak for those who can not speak for themselves and stand up for the powerless.

Christian mother, you have a most important job. Train your child to walk with Christ. In 18 years, there are 936 Lord's Days. That is a lot, but not an unlimited quantity. Will you bring your kids to church? Will you tell them about Jesus? Will you teach them how to live, like Lemuel's mom did?

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



The Hidden Gospel

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nations are idols" (Ps. 96:5). J. B. Rotherham has it: "For all the gods of the peoples are things of naught." In I Corinthians 8:4 Paul declared: "**...we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.**" Nevertheless, the unsaved serve Satan as if he were a god: "**Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods**" (Gal. 4:8). All false worship is Devil worship (Deut. 32:17; I Cor. 10:20), a worship of no-gods.

The great work of the Devil is to hide the gospel. It is not hid by the ministers who preach it. True ministers and missionaries do not handle "**the word of God deceitfully,**" but they make

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The Hidden Gospel

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“manifestation of the truth” (II Cor. 4:2). They give themselves to the ministry of the Word. Paul and his companions said: **“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake”** (II Cor. 4:5). Ministers and missionaries do their best to send forth the gospel light to a world darkened by sin and Satan. But Satan puts a veil upon the minds of men to prevent them from seeing the light of the gospel of Christ. In Luke 8:12 Christ said: **“Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.”**

SATAN BLINDS THE MINDS OF MEN

Is it not strange that Satan fears the gospel so much as some say millions are saved without the gospel? If the hardshell heresy were so, it would seem the Devil should have no fear of the preaching of the gospel. It would appear that the Devil is better informed than some preachers. Some preachers see no need of preaching the gospel so sinners can be saved. However, the adversary of souls does not share their opinion. He knows there is no salvation without faith in the gospel of Christ.

Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers. He keeps them in the dark about the gospel of Christ. The Prince of Darkness battles with God, and the battlefield is the mind of man. Satan has no trouble in blinding the mind of a man because naturally man has a **“wicked mind”** (Prov. 21:27) that is **“enmity against God”** (Rom. 8:7). Fallen man has a **“corrupt mind”** (I Tim. 6:5) and he walks

“in the vanity” of his mind (Eph. 4:17). He is an enemy of God in his mind by wicked works (Col. 1:21). Only in regeneration is the mind renewed (Rom. 12:2) and restored to soundness (II Tim. 1:7).

Satan does not oppose the world of fashion and entertainment. He does not oppose even crusades for moral reform. But the moment a man comes on the scene and begins to shine the gospel on benighted minds, Satan goes into a rage and declares war on the minister of the Word. This is why missionaries are driven out of certain countries and can have no ministry at all in certain other parts of the world. Behind the scenes of many pastors being run out of their church is a working, smiling Devil. The Prince of Darkness hates the gospel which is about Christ being God in His divine nature and attributes. He despises and hates all preachers of the gospel of the grace of God, and he would murder them all if God would permit.

CONCLUSION

1. We live in a deluded and deceived world. Satan does all in his power to keep men and women, boys and girls, in the dark about the gospel of Christ. Every impenitent person is deceived and blinded by Satan. He is deceived about his own condition, the real purpose of life, his prospects for eternity. His heart is deluded as to death, the judgment, and Hell. He is in a state of unbelief and in a perishing condition. He is blinded to the very gospel that is the means of his salvation. Soon death will overtake him and his soul will be lost.

2. Satan will use every device and art to prevent the gospel from shining upon the hearts of people. Every skill that can be used will be used. If men can

be blinded and hoodwinked, Satan will not hesitate to do it. If religious lies can be made plausible and cunning, Satan and his ministers will diffuse them in the world. The Prince of Darkness does all in his power to blind the perishing and lead them down to Hell.

3. The gospel is a light that shines out of darkness. It is a light that God causes to shine in the hearts of believers who do not perish. It is a light that reveals the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. To see this glory is to be saved. If men are not saved by seeing this glory of Christ in the gospel, they must never expect any thing else to save them, for there is no other method or means of salvation.

4. Ministers have an obligation to preach the pure gospel---a message about the glories of the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They do not need to add the gospel of carnal amusement to the gospel of Christ. They do not need to add such things as baptism and all kinds of good works. Let men preach the simple truth about Christ and nothing but the truth. There should be no deception, no tricks, no disguise.

5. The gospel of Christ should be embraced by those to whom it comes. Those who hear it are under a most sacred obligation to receive it and become Christians. Men need to be roused from the Devil’s deception and made to see the danger of sin and Hell. Soon you will be on your death-bed and then you will look over the follies of life. When death overtakes you, will you be crowned in Heaven or cursed in Hell? Oh, may it please the Lord to make the gospel to shine into your benighted heart!



Joy Cometh in

(Continued from page 1) ♦

ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him” (Luke 11:1-13)? Jesus here is teaching His disciples how to pray. It is not word-for-word the prayer we are to recite but rather

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Small Drops

By Joseph M. Sidders of
Guntown, Mississippi

"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).



GIVE YOUR FAMILY TO GOD

"There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God" (Acts 10:1-4).

A "gentile dog" such as Cornelius had his prayers heard before God, praise the Lord! He was a centurion, a leader of men, but also a leader of his home. Look again at verse 2, **"A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway."** Cornelius was not afraid to lead his home.

We have in our day, a major problem with leading our homes. Beloved, we have grown all too comfortable with alien leadership in our home, related or not related. Uncle Sam (USA) and grandma were not called to lead your families, gentlemen...you were! We should recognize every life as a miracle and every family as being God-given. When this is our starting point we can then answer the question, have we been good stewards over what we

have been given? Have we trusted the Lord to lead us through family devotions and prayer time?

Look again at verse 2, Cornelius was known as a man who gave much, feared God, and prayed always. What can we understand from this? A few things naturally come to mind when someone asks me how my family devotion is going, first the guilt that I have not done enough, and second the excuses as to why that is the case. Cornelius was a centurion of the Italian band. I am sure when asked he might have plenty of excuses as to why he could not do more with his time. Yet, we see that his whole house was made to fear the Lord. That means he led at home. That means his wife and his children saw that God was real to him and one to be worshiped preeminently over all other activities in his life.

So the math appears to be fairly simple: if you want your kids to worship and fear the Lord, they **MUST** first see that at home. Dad's are often looked at as the hero for their daughters and a superhero for their sons. Imagine the impression that gives a child when their hero or superhero bends the knee to a greater power.

Later in the chapter Simon Peter is called to come preach the Word of God to Cornelius, and when he arrives verse 24 tells us that Cornelius had his **"kinsmen"** or kinfolk with him ready to be fed. Verse 27 makes it clear that Peter came in to find a great number gathered together. Imagine your next family get together. Picture

your kids, grandkids, nieces and nephews gathering around the table to hear the Word of God. Beloved reader, I urge you yet today to turn your family to God through devotion and prayer. Show them there is one worthy to be worshipped!

(Joseph Sidders is pastor of the Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, Mississippi.)



Joy Cometh in

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a model of how to pray. Verse 2 emphasizes our need to call for His will to be done and not our own. Verse 3 shows our need for His provisions. Verse 4 is a plea for God's mercy for us and through us.

The fact that Jesus had to pray while He was ministering here on earth is proof enough that we need to pray. Jesus prayed at His baptism (Luke 3:21), before He chose the twelve (Luke 6:12), at the transfiguration (Luke 9:28), before He was arrested (Luke 22:40-44), on the cross (Luke 23:46), and at other times (Luke 5:16; 9:18). The twelve soon learned the importance of prayer. We must also note that the disciple's lesson on prayer did not end with a model but rather went straight to application. Our ministry must be precisely the same way! What good is the preacher's sermon if it stops at the back door?

Here is the lesson from our text, may the Lord see fit to guide us in its application. First we must pray selflessly. In His example, Jesus told His disciples of a man knocking at midnight asking for three loaves of bread. Our initial response might be concerning the inconvenience of the hour. I ask you to consider whether you were born-again for a more convenient

hour than this very one here today? In 2020, when most things seemed inconvenient the Lord was still blessing those who sought after Him in that hour; and to those who were faithful to knock.

"For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him" (Luke 11:6). These loaves of bread were not for the midnight knocker but rather for the comfort of his friend. Jesus is using the midnight knocker in the illustration as the one doing the praying and the house upon which he knocks is that of God the Father. With that in mind we can see that the door upon which he has come is God the Son.

This man seeking loaves of hope is asking for it as comfort for another. Is this how we are found praying? Do we come seeking spoils for our own household, or do we want life for the lost souls around us?

Secondly, we are called to pray shamelessly. **"And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth"** (Luke 11:7-8). This word **"importunity"** means shamelessly and it is the very key that opens the door. Jesus points out that it is not because the need for these loaves is for the midnight knocker's friend, but because the need is so great that the knocker would shamelessly come to the door and knock at this late hour. Verse 5 makes it clear that the door being knocked on is also considered a friend to

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Joy Cometh in

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this midnight knocker. What kind of a friend would put a man out for a need that is not his own? He had his children to bed, perhaps he himself was in bed. I will tell you what kind of friend would travel the roads at this late hour for the welfare of his friend: and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. Was it not the Lord Jesus Christ who shamelessly paid the price for you on the cross, dear friend? Did He not at this late hour come to the throne of God asking for loaves of hope for you? Does He not still today, as your intercessor, go before God pleading your case and saying "He is my beloved friend and he hungers"? Consider the wisdom given to the psalmist in Psalms 4, **"Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah. But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety."**

Thirdly, we should pray seeking-to-find. **"And I say unto you, Ask,**

and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Luke 11:9-10). We see in our text that the midnight knocker went to a friend asking for loaves of hope. He came seeking a blessing and in faith he knocked on the door. Make no mistake beloved friends, God has not left us in this world in vain. You have a purpose. You have a great reach in your community! Will you not come to the door that is Jesus Christ seeking a blessing for your mission field?

The Lord Jesus does not say that there is a mere chance of a blessing here, but that coming to this door, even at this late hour, you are assured a blessing!

A. – Ask -> RECEIVE!

S. – Seek -> FINDETH!

K. – Knock -> OPENED!

We are today in the waning hours of this world. It has received judgment because of our own sin. Yet the Lord is faithful and He says in these concluding verses that He will not answer our prayers of faith with a curse. **"If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him"** (Luke 11:11-13)? These words (stone, serpent, and scorpion) imply things that are dead or inanimate, wicked, and toxic. If being totally depraved we come seeking loaves of hope for our lost friends, **"how much more shall your heavenly Father give?"**

This also reveals, beloved, what it is that we should be praying for and what the Father will provide, that is God the Holy Spirit. Pray expecting to receive of the Holy Spirit, beloved! Pray expecting comfort and hope, knowledge, and opportunities for application through prayer. There is only one source of hope for this world and that is salvation through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the joy that cometh in the morning, dear friend. Let us each eagerly ask, seek, and knock, even at this late hour, that our lost friends would receive this blessing.

The psalmist calls for us to sing unto the Lord and give thanks that God Himself will remember His absolute holiness. His anger toward the elect is but for a moment, His favor toward them is eternal. **"Weeping may endure for a night" but joy, beloved, "cometh in the morning"** (Ps. 30:5). Let us be faithful fishers of men and shameless midnight knockers for the blessings of God!



Is the Wuhan

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ten signs of these perilous times. As true as they are turning out to be, so too, are the promises of the return of the Lord. **"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ"** (I Thess. 5:9). **"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed"** (Rom. 13:11). Selah! Think about it!

The antidote to the Wuhan virus is not a vaccine, which I will never get, but rather... **"I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely**

he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. ...Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling" (Ps. 91:2-10). I call this part of the 91st Psalm the eleventh commandment: **"Thou shalt not be afraid."** There is a world of difference between due concern and faithless fear. It is understood that there is a need to protect the elderly (the ones at risk) and to take precautions of cleanliness, but the fear that I see in so many eyes, including Christians, is a very real sin. **"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love"** (I John 4:18). Do not just "say" that God will take care of us-believe that He Loves us and will never let us down! **"Thou shalt not be afraid."** Selah! Think about it!

What is actually in the "news" and the relevant notice that must be taken of the Wuhan virus and its significance is not the virus itself. Covid-19 (of 22?) is just another influenza virus and the numbers simply do not place it in a category above any, but that of "another serious" flu bug. The extraordinary significance of the Wuhan virus is rather the government and public reaction to it. Certainly this 2020 flu is

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Brief Truths

By Randy Johnson of
Texarkana, Texas

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



ONLY BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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

When Jesus was on the earth, He was the power of God walking and doing on the earth. It was Jesus that saved sinners, Jesus made the blind see, Jesus healed many people from many things, yes, it was Jesus the Son of God. How did Jesus manage to do all these things, He is God in the flesh? It was also Jesus that started the church in Jerusalem, and as He called lost souls to salvation, He began to build His first church. We see this church membership in Acts 1, we even see them vote and select Matthias to be the 12th Apostle to replace Judas who betrayed Jesus. When Jesus ascended into heaven the church was powerless, because without the power of God Christians and churches are powerless. Even the Apostle Paul admitted that everything he did was through the power of God. **"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"** (Phil. 4:13). God also told Israel these words, **"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness"** (Isa. 41:10).

Therefore, we must conclude that without the power of God we cannot do anything for God. But it was ordered by God that the church would begin to do their spiritual duties once the Holy Spirit replaced Jesus as the Christian strength. It is only AFTER we receive the power of the Holy Spirit that we can be witnesses for God. Without the power of the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing, but with His power we can move mountains. **"Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ"** (Rom. 15:19). Jesus told us, His churches, to go into the world and preach the gospel to every person. However, He did not mean our preaching would accomplish anything. The gospel of itself is just words and words have no power. The power of the words is the power of God in them. Paul asks this question, Romans 10:14, **"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"** This preacher is not necessarily a pastor or a minister, the word is defined as, one who cries the divine truth of the gospel, meaning it is simply a witness of the true gospel. It is not our witness of the true gospel but of the One who makes the lost soul with the dead spirit able to

hear the gospel for the first time. As witnesses, we are to carry the gospel message to the world, but the gospel is heard where the Holy Spirit makes it heard. **"And how shall they preach, except they be sent..."** (Rom. 10:15)? If there is no ability to hear the gospel then the gospel is just words. **"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"** (Rom. 10:17). Therefore, without the Holy Spirit's power we have no power, none. Whether it is Christians, pastors, or entire churches, we live and have our being only by God's spirit. Thank you, Lord, for that power!

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



Is the Wuhan

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not an epidemic, much less a pandemic. Skewed numbers are constantly paraded in a media-driven frenzy that was jumped on and turned into a liberal and Democratic propaganda flurry designed to drive President Donald Trump from office after an impeachment and Russian collusion witch hunt failed to do so. Amazing and desperate measures were taken worldwide, as governments failed to prudently protect the elderly, by mistakenly quarantining the healthy, instead of the sick. Ridiculous efforts to "flatten the curve," via social distancing and masking of a frightened populace by trumped up healthcare experts, actually prolonged a normal flu season further into the calendar year (when the flu should have died a normal summer death with herd immunity) and beyond into once again the more dangerous winter season, with the expected spike in fatalities among the "at

risk" members of our societies. Now we are faced with "untested" vaccines that will wreak their infamous "low percentage" risks that will continue the death tolls.

But enough of my frustrated ranting at decisions already made (for us) by our increasingly more powerful and thereby more dangerous public officials. Actually the Wuhan virus (response) is vitally pertinent to the endtimes and a very key part in Bible prophecy.

#1) God is allowing Satan to consolidate much of his earthly power (in high places) of governments worldwide. The United Nations and World Health Organization are quickly moving into positions of prominence that will coincide with the events that will rapidly lead to the promotion of a world saviour, AntiChrist (John 5:43, **"I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."**) immediately after the Lord Jesus Christ "raptures" out His saints.

#2) Satan is getting folks used to surrendering their personal liberties for a "promised" safety that is no safe bet, at all. This is exactly how Daniel prophesies the AntiChrist will come to power. **"And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries"** (Dan. 11:21). Flatteries is a cover word for lies.

#3) Mandatory is now a common word being used by world governments. Listen to this prophecy! **"And he (AntiChrist) causeth all (mandatory!), both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their**

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foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. ...and his number is Six hundred threescore and six" (Rev. 13:16-18). Yep! The Lord is coming even sooner, if 666 is coming to our local markets and shops this soon. Within 21 months of the impending rapture, the AntiChrist will already have a vast bloc of Catholicized religious nations under his duplicitous sway. The 2020-2021 Covid-19 flu virus has begun a series of dominoes falling before our very eyes. Mandatory "shelter-at-home," then mandatory social distancing (creating distrust of fellow Americans), then mandatory masking (furthering animosity and Big Brother control), to be followed certainly by mandatory vaccinations. What then is left to the imagination? Mandatory 666 cannot be far off, beloved reader. If not from the Wuhan virus, then the next fake news media frenzy "famine, pestilence or earthquake."

I am not prophesying or saying the Lord has to rapture His saints in 2021; I am just feeling the "south wind blowing" and saying that it is likely that the Lord is going to rapture His saints in 2021. **"And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time"** (Luke 12:55-56)? Hey, the fig tree nation of Israel is planted in Palestine and the time grows late for the fullness of the Gentile and church age. Are you ready for Him to come? I know His saints ought to be quivering with excitement, instead of fear. I hope

this little treatise will encourage His people. But if you have not found Jesus yet, you have nothing but fear to face, with the sin that doth so easily beset you. It will drag you down to Hell, friend. I pray the Holy Spirit will convict you of the peril of delay in this dark and shuttering hour. Please repent of your sin and trust the Lord Jesus Christ with your life and your family. Only His blood can make restitution to a Holy God for your sins. Flee the culture of death around us and grab hold of the Saviour of life, Jesus Christ. Selah! Think about it!



Shouldest Thou

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of Jehoshaphat; and, he essentially rebukes him here, through the words of Jehu, and He promises that there will be chastisement upon Jehoshaphat.

I would like us to take this question that was asked of King Jehoshaphat, and I would like to apply this question and perhaps these same actions of Jehoshaphat to the people of the Lord today. I want to show you how that we, too, ought to be careful that we do not aid or assist the ungodly in their pursuit of sin. We live in a wicked world, and sometimes we forget that our family, friends, acquaintances, or even our nation or society as a whole, does not have God's Will in mind and yet, we associate, aid, or even assist them in the pursuit of their own desires and pleasures, vainly imagining that we can mix with the world, and still please God.

I do not mean to say that we ought not interact with the world of the unbelievers (the ungodly)—surely, we must go to them, engage them, and give them the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, we ought

not become one with them, and we ought not join with them in their causes and their purposes, and we certainly ought not love the sin that so enthralls the world. If we get too close to the sin or the sinners, we run the danger of aiding the wicked in their evil endeavors. We must not become allies with sinners as this is a mistake that Jehoshaphat made.

We often hear the phrase: "Love the sinner, but not the sin." Though it is true that we need to demonstrate love towards men and women as we seek to deliver men from Satan and Hell, we must be careful not to love the ones who hate God and we must not embrace them and their doings. Instead we must warn them, and declare unto them the truth. If you read the entirety of the question which Jehu asked Jehoshaphat, you will realize there should be no love given to man that would compromise our love and devotion (obedience) unto God. **"Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD?"** Do you want to love the sinners but not the sin? You can only do so by telling them they are sinners, and they need Jesus Christ. The love you desire to show the sinner is fulfilled in the declaration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the repentance and faith found in our Saviour. These are what the sinner and the world of the ungodly needs from us. The world does not need our aid or assistance in earthly or mortal pursuits; rather, the world desperately needs the salvation that comes from God. The world does not need our help, our aid, our affection, or even our physical love; rather, the world needs to hear about the love of God in sending Jesus Christ into the world of sinners to save His people from their sins. This is

what we owe the world, nothing more. This is what we contribute to the survival of mankind, nothing more. What the Gospel can and does accomplish in the world of men is marvelous indeed. And we, as the churches of Jesus Christ, and as the children of God in this world, are blessed with the tremendous privilege of being messengers of the good news, and advocates for God and goodness.

Still, we tend to grow too close and too attached to the world. Sometimes we become friends and allies to those around us. Sometimes we become indifferent or apathetic in the presence of sin and choose to continue as friends of a person or persons who are involved in sin simply because we are not so much offended by the sin as we ought to be. We are not doing these sinners whom we claim to love, any favors by ignoring or tolerating their sin. We would best serve them by performing the role of a real friend, and crying out against their sinful ways, warning them of judgment to come, and pointing them to Jesus Christ as their only Hope and Saviour!

As a warning to each of us, what I would like for us to do, is to notice some ways in which we are all either wittingly, or unwittingly helping the ungodly of the world.

THROUGH OUR SILENCE

So, let me pose this question again: "Shouldest thou help the ungodly?" Well, of course, if you are saved by the grace of God, you will answer me by saying, "No, we should not help the ungodly." And yet, I want to show you that we, the people of God, are daily helping the ungodly through our silence. In fact, it is very evident that we sit idly by, and quietly allow sin and wickedness to proceed unimpeded by us.

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Shouldest Thou

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Sometimes, we may keep silence in the face of sin, because we might be afraid of what retribution the world might have for us. Well, I want you to know that we should not allow fear to keep us from speaking out against sin. (For an example of fearlessness in Jehoshaphat's life, see II Chron. 20:17). The Lord Jesus Christ said, **"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows"** (Matt. 10:28-31).

Other times, we might not say much (or anything at all) against the sins and wicked behavior we witness, because we might be ashamed—ashamed either of what others might say about us, or ashamed of what standing we might lose in society. Again, let me remind you that we should not allow shame to keep us from speaking out against sin. The Apostle Paul once said, **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"** (Rom. 1:16). After all, is our citizenship here, or in Heaven? And, are we more ashamed of what men might think of us, or of what God might think of us?

Also, I know there are times when we apparently condone sin through our silence, because, maybe, just maybe, we ourselves do not really consider sin to be

sin. This may come from a lack of knowledge. We need to be strong in the Word of God in order to differentiate between right and wrong, so that we can be the proper example to the world! Or, we might not consider sin properly, sometimes, because we hope, somehow, that the churches of Christ and other Christians will come to at least tolerate, and maybe even become accepting of certain sinful behaviors that we may not (in the flesh) find offensive. In other words, sometimes we do not speak out against sin in our society or our families, or our churches because we secretly might hope that that particular sin might become acceptable, or something that we just hope God's people will overlook. Well, the Scriptures teach us that we should not allow our own secret pleasure in sin to keep us from speaking out against sin. Instead, we should cry out to God to show us our own sins, and then give us the strength to not only turn from sin ourselves, but also the strength and conviction to seek to turn others from sin! **"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh"** (Jude 21-23). God give us grace and strength to have a righteous hatred of sin, and to seek to make a difference in the lives of others. Far from helping the ungodly achieve their ungodly goals, we should be seeking to stamp out ungodliness, both in our lives, and in the lives of others. Do not just stand idly by; but, rather, declare sin to be sin, and take it upon yourselves to warn and instruct others against

sin. Perhaps the Lord will be merciful, and save both you and your brother (or sister) from the powers and presence of sin.

THROUGH OUR PARTICIPATION

"Shouldest thou help the ungodly?" Again, you and I know that we ought not to do so. And yet, we do help the ungodly and not just through our silence. Sadly, it is also true that we will, from time to time, and sometimes in seemingly harmless ways, help the ungodly through our participation in their sinful ways. Brothers and sisters, let me tell you as Jesus Christ has said, **"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon"** (Matt. 6:22-24). It is an undeniable fact that the children of God in this world have, many times, indulged in the sins and evils of this world. I know that when we fall in these sins, we will repent and turn to God. And, I know those who are truly saved will, ultimately, persevere in the way of righteousness and truth and grace. And yet, still we sin. And yet, still we participate in sins and earthly pleasures, at least from time to time. The Apostle Paul warned against such behavior: **"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by**

partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid" (I Tim. 5:20-25).

Personally, I know that when I sin against the Lord, and when I perceive of my failures in the flesh, I will regret what it is I have done or, what it is I have left undone. But, most of the time we imagine that we are only hurting ourselves. However, I submit to you that when we indulge in sin and evil and iniquitous behavior in this life, we are not just hurting ourselves; we are, in fact, helping the ungodly to promote their ways and their agenda in the world today. If we consider the actions of King Jehoshaphat, we find that even though he wanted to do good unto Israel, and even though he thought to help them and direct them towards the Lord; in reality, what he accomplished was to help the ungodly kings of Israel, and to help perpetuate the cause of those that denied the power of God and the service of the Lord. An immediate result of his actions was that Ahab was slain in the battle in which Jehoshaphat aided him. Now, some might say that the death of Ahab was for the ultimate good of Israel, and would have meant a respite from persecution for those who sought to serve God in Israel. However, remember that Jehoshaphat thought he was doing good by aiding Ahab personally; but the good that he sought to do resulted

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Luke 2:40 tells us that Jesus grew in favor with God. If Jesus was equal to God the Father, how is it possible for Him to “grow in favor with” God the Father?

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“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him...And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:40, 52).

These two verses in no way invalidate the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ or detract from His equality with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Rather, these verses prove that Jesus Christ as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity was truly God incarnate with both a Divine and a human nature in one Person. These verses have to do with the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. He physically grew as any other child would and developed emotionally and mentally as a human being. These texts both highlight the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ as a man grew in favor with God and man like no other person ever has or ever will. He was the perfect, impeccable man without any flaws, defilements, or traces of human depravity. He was born without a sin nature, and lived His entire earthly life without sin, ultimately qualifying Him as the one and only perfect sacrifice for sinners.

John Gill, the Baptist expositor,

had some interesting comments on this passage:

“In body, in strength, and in stature; which shews that it was a true body Christ assumed, and like ours, which did not come to its maturity at once, but by degrees: and waxed strong in spirit, or in His soul; for as He had a true body, He had also a reasonable soul; the faculties of which were far from being weak, they were exceeding strong, and appeared stronger and stronger every day; His understanding was clear, His judgment solid, and His memory strong and retentive, His will and the desires of it, were to that which is good and His affections cleaved unto it...Filled with wisdom: and knowledge as man: for this is to be understood, not of His essential wisdom as God, nor of those treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which were hid in Him as Mediator, to be dispensed to His church; but of His created and natural wisdom as man; in which He increased gradually, as His body grew, and the faculties of His soul opened under the influences of His Deity, and the power of His spirit; and the grace of God was upon Him; which designs not the fullness of grace that was in Him, as Mediator, for the supply of His people: but either that internal grace which was bestowed on His human nature, even the various graces of the Spirit of God, and which flowed from the grace of union of the two natures in Him; or rather the love and favour of God, which in various instances was in a very

singular manner manifested to Him” (Gill’s Expositor, Vol. 7, pp. 531-532).

For more of a contemporary explanation that arrives at basically the same conclusion, John MacArthur observed:

“Jesus did not cease being God or divest Himself of Divine attributes in order to become man. Rather He took on a human nature (an addition, not a subtraction), and submitted the use of His Divine attributes to the will of the Father. Therefore there were times when His omniscience was on display (Matt. 9:4; John 2:24-25; 4:17-18; 11:11-14; 16:30) and other times when it was veiled by His humanity in accordance with the Father’s will (Mark 13:32). Christ was therefore subject to the normal process of human growth, intellectually, physically, spiritually, and socially.” (MacArthur Bible Commentary, p. 1280).

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“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. ...And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:40, 52).

There sure is a lot of pondering to be done on these two incredible verses relating to the humanity of Jesus Christ, as He was born of the virgin Mary and raised by her and Joseph. As we read these verses, “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature...” the stature part on the surface seems fairly

straightforward in that, as every child in Nazareth, He grew taller in physical stature. There are depths yet in that word that could intimate a fame, or an increasing number of folks that would be witness to this perfect child’s actions and words, and be awed and cause Him to be “taller in stature,” not necessarily physically, but in their minds and in degrees of high esteem. Can you even start to imagine the stories told by the other kids and their parents? Yeah! Tough to rationalize away, but how much more the wisdom part? That part, “**Jesus increased in wisdom...**” really floors my imagination. Selah! Think about it!

How could the immutable One increase in wisdom (or anything else for that matter)? How could the all-knowing, omniscient One learn anything new, if He already knows everything? “**Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever**” (Heb. 13:8). Which Scripture is correct? Well, as is always the case when asked about the Scriptures in this manner the answer is both are correct. They must be, because the Word of God is infallible. So, if they seem conflicting to us, let us read them again without prejudice to see where our thinking might be wrong and find the truth found right here in the Bible.

Let us go to the familiar passage of Philippians 2:5-8, “**Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death,**

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. I am considering moving to an area far, far away from my present location. My major problem is that there are no Baptist churches in that entire area that use wine for their Lord's Supper/Communion observance. I consider this to be very important in how one observes this Baptist ordinance. What do you suggest that I do in this situation?

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It sounds to me like you have already answered your own question. If you believe that it is imperative that you belong to a church that uses the scriptural element of wine in the Lord's Supper: then you cannot violate your conviction or your conscience. If you cannot in good conscience join a Baptist church that uses grape juice in the Lord's Supper: it indicates to me that you would be unwilling to come under the authority of that church. In all probability, you would also serve to disrupt the unity of the new church if you are unable to submit to church authority; as it pertains to the elements of the Lord's Supper.

Two verses that may be applicable to your case are found in the Scriptures. Romans 14:23 states: **"And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."** James 4:17 declares: **"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."** My advice is pretty simple. Do not ever move to an area that does not have a church you can in good conscience join for whatever

reason. If you have a clear-cut choice in the matter stay in the church that you love and are in agreement with. One of the biggest mistakes people make in life is to willfully move to an area that does not have a church they can join. I understand that there are times when it is unavoidable. However, more money, a larger house, or a better climate cannot replace spiritual growth in a church of the Lord Jesus Christ that you love and are in full agreement with.

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There can only be one answer to this question with two possibilities, in my opinion. I can with their permission give you the names and phone numbers of those who have already faced these issues, in one way or another.

There are only two possibilities to be Scripturally correct. Before you move, the most important thing to do is, first find a church of like faith and practice (wine in the Lord's Supper). That should already be written in the By-Laws and Articles of Faith of the church you now attend.

That means you do not look for a house first, or a job second, or

vice versa. You look for a church! What if there is not a church of like faith and practice (wine in the Lord's Supper), like you are suggesting. Then the answer is simple, do not move. As far as I am concerned finding a church is priority or do not expect God to bless your decision.

Number two possibility! Reach out to other sister churches of like faith and practice (wine in the Lord's Supper) with your dilemma, and see if there is a possibility that a mission work could be started in the area that you are wanting to move to.

If God is in it where you are wanting to move, then He already has a man out there that He will give the burden to! That is probably not what you were hoping to hear. Maybe one of the other writers can shed more light on this issue than I have. It is always best to seek God first in our decision making, we can not go wrong when He is first in our life. I will be praying that things work out for you. God Bless your efforts.

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Do not Go! You are correct in that it would be a major problem. My advice is to reconsider and make sure that you are not moving away from God's will for your precious family. If you are moving for secular reasons and God is not in it, you are playing with eternal fire consequences. If God is in it, your path will be revealed, I know, but I would really be on my spiritual knees

over such a pivotal and dangerous decision. Selah! Think about it!

First question: How much would you have to expand "that entire area" to find a Baptist church that observes the Lord's Supper properly? Even if you had to drive an extra hour or so, it would be better for you and your family. It might be worth checking into.

I would really hesitate to join a grape juice church knowing that: 1) I could not observe a very critical commandment of God for the duration, because drinking anything other than fermented wine for this Holy Ordinance is definitely a sin to our Holy God. Representing the pure blood of Jesus Christ with the leaven of grape juice is blasphemy. 2) Knowing that I willingly (by choice of move) would not be a faithful Baptist church member for the duration of the move. It really is a problem of major proportions if our service to God suffers. My convictions from Scripture are that you would be relinquishing your opportunity to be in the Bride of Christ if you never observe the Lord's Supper exactly as your Bridegroom did. This major problem is a Bride of Christ-sized problem. A sanctified candidate for that Holy Bride must fulfill three prerequisites: 1) Called unto salvation—saved by the (unleavened) blood of the Lamb. 2) Chosen by the Lord and added to one of His blessed Baptist congregations. 3) Faithful within that membership, for as long as ye both shall live. **"...the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful"** (Rev. 17:14) Selah! It

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Forum Question #1

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even the death of the cross.” It really happened. God became man, and retained 100% God-ness (deity) and was made 100% Man-ness (humanity). He humbled Himself and became obedient. Real actions, not just words or a hypothetical scenario. He breathed, ate, drank, voided, slept and did everything naturally that a created Adam would do in the Garden of Eden. Chronologically, He maintained the physiology of a human being. That means He walked to Capernaum, or He rode a donkey into Jerusalem. He thirsted at the well of Samaria and drank wine at the wedding of Cana. He performed miracles galore and then died on the Cross of Calvary. He fulfilled the will of His Father infinitely and loved His disciples **“unto the end.”** It is not hard now to understand, that because of these worthy actions, the remainder of the passage goes: **“Wherefore (“..increasing in favour with God and man.”) God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”** (Phil. 2:9-11). What else could every blessed word and action do, but increase the adoration and appreciation of His greatness. Selah! Think about it!

But that still does not answer the evident “growing” of our Saviour in the various senses that we read in these verses. The best passage I have found is the very deep waters of Hebrews 5:7-9, **“Who in the days of his flesh, when**

he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” The first phrase **“he feared”** is actually rather simple, when we know what fear God means. We are not living in terror of God (although a little terror at times is healthy) when we fear God. It is a reverential fear that is actually more love, respect and honor than anything else. Check out the other usages of this Greek word (*eulabeia*) and its root, and we find the action that Christ performed when **“he feared”** is that He revered His Father and “devoutly” respected His part in the triune Godhead to submit and sacrifice His life and honour.

The phrase **“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience...”** is not adding previously “unknown” knowledge, beloved reader. How many times did He inform His disciples of the future in precise and exact details? The sense of the word **“learned”** is that He personally “experienced” the obedience. He lived the trials and joys of the life of the Son of God. He individually and literally conformed to the submission, that was unnecessary for His benefit, but was so very necessary for ours, and likewise accepted the predestinated will of God, unto the salvation of God’s elect.

The last phrase in this glorious passage we need to address is **“And being made perfect...”** As if He were ever imperfect. No, no, a thousand no’s, of course not. The word **“perfect”** as used throughout Scripture means

“complete.” Again, it does not imply “incompleteness” previous, but rather it proclaims an accomplishment being completed and perfected. What did this same Jesus cry out on the cross of Golgotha? **“..it is Finished!”** It is complete! It is perfect! **“And being made perfect...”** **“..I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was”** (John 17:4-5).

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52). Personally, I do not think even in the eternal ages to come, that He will ever stop increasing in displaying His infinite wisdom and glorious stature, and particularly He will eternally be growing in the favour of both God and man. Infinity knows no saturation. We will love Him even more and all the more. Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP

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The key to the answer to this question is Christ’s Humanity. Jesus Christ is the second person in the Godhead. God came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ. Even though God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are One, they are also three separate beings or persons fulfilling Their position (duty) of the Godhead. Also read John 1:1-5.

God is in heaven...so where is Jesus? Well, He is in heaven as well. **“That the God of our**

Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 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, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:17-23).

What is He (Jesus) doing? **“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us”** (Rom. 8:34). **“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them”** (Heb. 7:25). At this point let me interject, the Holy Spirit is here with the Christian. **“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to**

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Forum Question #1

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you” (John 14:16-18).

So you have three different persons working in three different capacities or positions, The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. When God took on human form in the Person of Jesus Christ, He became human in every capacity. **“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:14).**

Jesus also stated that He came to do the **“will of the Father”** though He was God come in the flesh born of a woman (God was not born of a woman, He always was) He (Jesus) could have done His own will, but He did not to show His sonship to the Father. **“All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him” (Matt.11:27).** **“I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (John 5:30).** Thus, God the Father was well pleased. **“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matt. 17:5).** And the text in question, **“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon**

him” (Luke 2:40). We could write a whole book here, but there have been many books written on Christ’s humanity already.

I have tried to be fair here to the one asking this question, and not to split hairs, but Luke 2:40 does not say that Jesus grew in favor with God! Even though God truly favored His Son. In fact, NOWHERE in Holy Writ does it say that. It says, **“the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom”** and it goes on to say, **“and the grace of God was upon him.”**

I do not know if I have answered this question in a way that will satisfy the one who has asked it or not, because it is not a legitimate question, since there is No such Scripture? But let me close and leave you, dear reader, with this one thought.

One of my most favorite verses of Scripture is Luke 22:41-44, **“And he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”** As far as I am concerned this shows God in the person of Jesus Christ and Christ’s true humanity as the Son of God. **“Remove this cup from me”** (which many do not understand), is not the crucifixion that is about to happen, but for the first time in all eternity God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ are about to be separated for the first and only time, for God will turn His back on His **“only begotten Son.”** Matthew 27:46, **“And about the**

ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Why? Because at that point in time, Jesus took my sins and yours upon Himself, and God cannot look upon sin. He did that for me, and you, if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour!

Also, we read in those verses that the angels came from heaven (God sent them) to give strength to God the Son, if this was God the Father He would not have needed to be strengthened. But in His Humanity the second person of the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God did. Praise God!

ROGER REED



Forum Question #2

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is Bible! Think about it!

To be clear, I am not unchurching any Baptist church that uses grape juice, but I am saying that they are in grave error. Both wine and grape juice cannot be correct, beloved reader. One or the other is false doctrine, and God will not countenance blasphemy within His churches for long, even as I recognize His longsuffering, which is extended for His purposes alone.

Option #1- Commute to a long distance church, where you can be a faithful member.

Option #2- Keep your membership in your current Baptist church and be faithful to return as often as possible. Weekly, preferably and especially when the Lord’s Supper is served. Attend the services of the most sound area church as a visitor when you cannot make it to your own church. Obviously it is not

your job to stir up controversy within this new church, but meekly worship the Lord with God’s precious saints and let your conversation be pure and holy amongst them. A warning to you if you spend more time here than you had originally planned. You are putting yourself and your family at risk on the matter of this heresy or any others that they might have. Junior and missy will be bosom buddies with other kids at this church, as will you and your wife, only naturally. But the younger ones in particular (we also are not invulnerable) will begin to wonder why such a big deal is made over just a little thing like a “fruit on a tree” and will waver over your family’s stand and say, if it is okay for them, why not for us? Selah! Think about it!

Option #3- Start a mission work, upon the approval and authorization of your current church. Do not do this frivolously, but seriously, if the Lord leads. It must become the most important purpose in your life, if God calls you to be His missionary (family). It will be a hard and difficult work, as every missionary gone on before will attest to. Obviously, this option is highly unlikely, but it is possible.

I am glad that you realize that you have a major problem. We will be praying for you, that God will give you answers, peace and all the grace that you will need. **“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 Peter 5:10).** Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



Church Discipline

PART TWO

By Roger Reed
of Mansfield, Ohio

We now want to look at the occasions for church discipline. The presence of unregenerated members, and their activities in church work furnishes one of the occasions for church discipline. These, not being saved, consequently, are not spiritually interested in the precepts and examples given in the Word of God, hence, they find themselves willingly ignorant of and running rough-shod over God's laws, rules, and regulations as laid down in the New Testament. Churches cannot help it because unregenerated members are occasionally found in their membership; Judas was in the first church. Of course, Jesus knew what he was, but the other members of the church did not, as he was such a shrewd hypocrite. For the best interest of such unsaved members, and for their eternal destiny they need to be dealt with very kindly and gently. But they do not need to be in the churches.

Church membership is for saved people and not for unsaved ones. The presence of unrestrained flesh furnishes another occasion for church discipline. Unrestrained flesh, that is, worldly-minded and worldly-acting members occasion many difficult church problems. Since the ways of the flesh are the ways of Satan, a yielding to it can but beget offenses against the divine laws of the Lord's house. Jesus taught His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. **"In the mean**

time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Luke 12:1). Paul said, **"A little leaveneth the whole lump"** (Gal. 5:9).

If disorderly members and heretical teachers are let go unchecked the leaven created by them will, in course of time, corrupt the whole church body. There is even great danger of the lampstand being removed from the church. **"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick (lampstand) out of his place, except thou repent"** (Rev. 2:5), if such things are allowed to continue.

The presence and activity of untutored enthusiasts in the membership, who clamor for conformity to the things practiced by the world and some so-called churches around them, often present churches with difficult problems. Such members, as a rule, desire to practice such things for social, political, and religious prestige, thus bringing in doctrinal corruption and a compromising spirit which destroys the orthodoxy (belief) and spirituality of the churches. These practices in the life of any church, if unchecked, will destroy the unity, the power and the fellowship of the churches, and will bring reproach on the name of its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

What about the urgency of church discipline? The presence of rebellion against the Word of God, the spiritual virus,

the modernistic, formal and dissipating influences in the life of a church demands immediate and stern action. For a church to dodge this matter means spiritual ruin to her. Sometimes we hear some say, "If we were to discipline our church, we would not have many members left." This may be true in some cases, but this does not alter nor discount the doctrine of church discipline nor the urgency of it being exercised. The dominion of such carnality in our churches strongly challenges them to clean house for the Lord. Most churches must make a comeback in this regard and clean up, or else, we shall soon find ourselves in a universal apostate condition.

Let us now look at the classes of church discipline. There are three kinds or classes of church discipline mentioned in the Scriptures: (1) Cases which deal with personal offenses; (2) Cases which deal with public offenses; (3) Cases which deal with doctrinal offenses. Each of these should be dealt with differently. God gives us a plan, in His Word, for each separate kind. Let us consider them in the order that I just named.

PERSONAL OFFENSES

Matthew 18:15-17. Details for such offenses are very clearly given here by the Lord Himself. We read: **"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen**

man and a publican." Observe here that no mention is made of a church-sent committee. There is neither precept nor example for the appointment of a committee by the church to settle the matter. The above-mentioned Scripture, as spoken by the Lord Himself, plainly states the manner in which we are to deal with personal offenses. When this plan is followed in spirit and in practice, the Lord will recognize it in heaven (Matt. 18:18).

Heaven is the headquarters for all the Lord's churches, and all things that are done according to His divine plan are recognized and endorsed in heaven. Jesus is the Head over all things to His churches, and He is in heaven at the right hand of the Father. This is, indeed, a serious matter and should be dealt with as such. In Matthew 18:18 we read: **"Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."** These are the same words as used by Jesus when He instituted His church, Matthew 16:13-19.

When Christ instituted His church, He gave it authority to discipline its members and promised to recognize in heaven what the church did on earth provided, of course, that it was done according to His instructions. The true church of Christ is His body as well as His espoused bride. Just as sure as one is loosed from the fellowship of one of the true churches of Christ, he is loosed from the fellowship of Christ. He is not loosed from his salvation, but from fellowship. One out of fellowship with the bride is also out of fellowship with the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. In the case of personal

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Church Discipline

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offenses, it is always best for the individual, wherever possible to be reconciled to his brother without any church action. This is according to the first step in the Lord's plan. Each child of God should always be ready to make reconciliation with an offended brother, it matters not how often he may be offended. Jesus said, **"... if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him"** (Luke 17:4).

PUBLIC OFFENSES

I Corinthians 5:1-13. In this passage we have an example of how to deal with one who has committed a public offense against the church, the house of God. The ground required for dealing with such an offender is, according to Paul's instruction to the church at Corinth, a local congregation, on the basis of a common report based on facts. First, before a church can act upon any case, her members must be gathered together, assembled. **"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ"** (I Cor. 5:4). This cannot be done by circulating a petition around to the members. Bear in mind the Scripture reads: **"Let all things be done decently and in order"** (I Cor. 14:40). Paul warns of the danger of allowing such matters to go uncurbed and unnoticed too long. Observe 1 Corinthians 5:6-7, **"Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"** A little sin and a little worldliness in the lives of a few of the members, if not removed, will soon corrupt the whole congregation. The

remedy is found in (v. 6) **"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump."** In verses 4-5 of this chapter the Corinthians are told what to do with the offender, **"...to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, (not the soul) that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."** From this we understand that it is an injustice to the offender to allow him to go undisciplined. To do so will cause him to lose respect for the house of God. In this passage we are instructed that we cannot, as a church, bother those wicked persons not in our membership, for God will deal with them.

As far as those who are in the membership are concerned, the church has a Scriptural right as well as a responsibility to deal with them. Let us read I Corinthians 5:12-13, **"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, Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."** This is to be done on the basis of a common report. No church committee is mentioned. Before leaving this topic let us take a glance at I Corinthians 5:9-11, **"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 idolators; for then must ye needs go out of the world."** (That is, not have fellowship with them, even though they are in 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 idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."**

Not only are churches to have no fellowship, but they are not to be found at the Lord's table with such, knowingly. In fact, Paul forbade the Corinthian church to partake of the Lord's Supper when there were divisions, strife, heresies and such-like things among them. Evidently, sin and carnality keep churches from exercising discipline among its membership (I Cor. 11:16-19).

Another example of public offenses is found in II Thessalonians 3:6, **"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received from us."** This is a direct command to the church at Thessalonica. As in the case of the Corinthian church, there is no mention of a church committee. Just simply a common report based on facts that satisfies the church is all that is needed. The Lord did not leave His churches helpless in the handling of disobedient and disorderly members. He knew there would be members in all the churches who would be worldly minded and slack toward God. He knew there would be those who would commit deeds that would bring a snare and a reproach on the churches, causing the world to have no respect for the church of God. He knew, too, that direct evidence of the offenses would be kept hidden from the churches wherever possible, therefore, He gave His churches, through the Apostle Paul and others, instructions by which they could discipline their members against public offenses on the ground of common report, it would help all thoughtless and disobedient church members to, read Acts 5:1-11.

HERETICAL OFFENSES

Titus 3 gives instructions regarding disciplinary measures as applied to doctrinal offenders. We read: **"A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject"** (Titus 3:10). This is not hard to understand, is it? Such an offender is to be admonished twice; after that, if he is not in harmony with sound doctrine he is to be rejected. As in the other cases, we find here no church-appointed committee is authorized to deal with the offender.

The practice of churches naming committees to effectuate discipline is completely without Scriptural sanction. Accordingly, such a practice is a human invention, the which, instead of helping a church out of trouble, betrays churches into more and deeper trouble. Someone may ask, "Does not a church have authority to name a committee to serve it at its own will and pleasure?" Yes, to be sure, this authority is essential in the divine "keys" which the Master delivered to His church by which it **"binds"** and **"looses,"** Matthew 16:19; 18:18. Nothing here is intended to discount the divine authority granted the local church by our Lord.

We are insisting, however, that the Scriptures nowhere suggest nor make provision for a committee to function in church discipline. In fact, the practice of appointing of committees to chase down rumors against members, or to try members, is borrowed from some so-called churches, rather than found in the Word of God. God has given us no such example. By common report, as referred to already, we mean a report on which the church can rely as evidence on which it may deal with a disorderly member of

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Church Discipline

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any of the above-named offenses.

Now we come to the last three points of church discipline. The first one being restoring disciplined members. In Galatians 6:1 we read: **“Brethren if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”** A church which is not in a condition to forgive an offending brother is not in a condition to discipline him. The spiritually strong members of the church should strive with all longsuffering and gentleness to reconcile the poor offender and bring him back into fellowship, if he will permit it. In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he pled with them to forgive such a man. He said, **“Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of the many (the majority), So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with over much sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him”** (II Cor. 2:6-8). Another word for **“Beseech”** is beg!

Secondly, results of church discipline. There are several noticeable results about churches which exercise church discipline. They are, as a rule, Spirit-led, consecrated and devoted to the Lord and His Word. They live morally clean lives and keep united in fellowship and brotherly love. They have the confidence of the world. The outsider who looks on soon decides that such a church is no place for criminals and crooks to harbor. They have the blessings, smiles and approval of heaven upon them. Living a

separated life is a doctrine that is taught from one side of the Bible to the other. God has always taught His people to live separate and apart from the world. **“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour”** (I Thess. 4:3-4).

Churches which practice church discipline will find that worldly minded and hypocritical members and certain kinds of people of the world will frown upon them. They will also find that the Lord and His consecrated saints will smile upon them. Churches which practice strict discipline are, as a rule, humble, Biblical, spiritual, steadfast, unmoveable and always abounding in the work of the Lord. **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord”** (I Cor. 15:58). Churches which practice strict discipline are, usually, soul-winning churches and are not mere member-getters. They believe in regeneration before church membership. May God help all His churches to see and know the value of the precious doctrine of strict church discipline. We are taught in the Word to adorn the doctrines of our Saviour in all things. **“Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things”** (Titus 2:10).

The doctrine of church discipline should be honored, taught, and obeyed along with all other fundamental doctrines of the New Testament. Conviction

for an offense, as a rule, means an exclusion from the church, although the congregation, the church, in minor cases, may inflict such penalties as demanding an apology, or a public expression of wrong-doing, repentance and a desire for forgiveness.

An excluded member should not be allowed to enter any other Baptist church (there are no other kinds of true churches) until he has settled the trouble with the church which excluded him. No other church should receive an excluded member, because, to do so, is to treat the sister church with contempt and thus be the means of breaking the fellowship between two sister churches. The church excluding the member will not grant him a letter of dismissal until he has set himself right with her. Hence, when the excluded member repents, he should at once set himself right with the church which excluded him, apply to them for restoration, and then, if he desires to unite with another Baptist church of like faith and practice, he can secure a letter of dismissal.

Lastly, the form of discipline. The method and form of discipline in Baptist churches are democratic and should be rigidly enforced. The Bible is the only faith and code of laws, and Baptist churches are its only exponents or advocates. A Baptist church has absolute power within itself to discipline its members, to punish heresy, wrong-living and evil-doing. From the local Baptist church (there are no other kinds) there is no appeal to a higher church-court or tribunal, for the very good reason that such higher courts do not exist. No association, convention, board of ruling elders, nor school of bishops has the power to set aside or reverse the decision of a Baptist

church. In this manner, Baptists declare, trouble in one church, or with one member, or with one pastor, can neither injure the denomination as a whole, nor should it bring about strife within the councils of the faith.

The disciplining of a member is the church's business and takes place in and through the local church itself. Any member of a congregation has a right, if he has knowledge of his guilt, to bring charges against any other member. Of course, such charges must be based upon some violation of Scriptural law, or denominational doctrine as based upon a **“thus saith the Lord”** in His Word.

In closing I would like to add a thought, and I was talking to my wife just the other day about this very thing. I have heard this from others as well as experiencing it myself. If I open up the Bible in front of you and ask you to read a portion of it, and you then turn to me and say, “I do not believe that,” I will replay to you, “What is not to believe?” There is a bumper sticker I have seen that reads, “God said it, I believe it, that settles it.” It does not matter if you believe it or not, God said it, that settles it! Sometimes I hear people say concerning God's Word, “Well, that is a gray area.” There are no gray areas with God, it is black or white, it is, or it is not! No middle ground with God. So, in my opinion, if you do not believe in church discipline, you are one of those that I have opened the Word of God to and you have replied, “I do not believe that!” And my reply to you would be, how can you not believe in something that is very well taught in the Word of God? God Help Us!



Shouldest Thou

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in the death of the one whom he sought to aid. And, in the overall scheme of things, Jehoshaphat's close ties with the wicked Israel monarchy, would result in terrible punishment and the proliferation of evil in both kingdoms. In fact, in the end, Jehoshaphat would bring trouble upon the southern kingdom of Judah, and even his own house, through uniting his house and the house of Ahab through marriage (See II Chron. 21:6). Jehoshaphat's son and grandson, would both seek to ally themselves with the wicked kings of Israel, and the Lord brought them low because of their participation in the sins of Israel.

Instead of associating with sin and sinners, as children of God, we should be evidently and clearly established as being on the side of good and righteousness. **"For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. 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"** (Luke 6:43-45). We must not stand by and watch sin increase; but, even more, we must not actively (or subtly) engage or assist in the proliferation of sin and sinners.

THROUGH OUR POOR WITNESS

I think I have shown you today, that we are, many times, guilty of "Helping the ungodly." We help the ungodly both through

our silence in the face of sin, and our (sometimes) sinful actions or inactions. However noble our intentions might be, we must always seek to make a clear difference between good and evil, and we ought to ally ourselves (always) with good and righteousness.

Well, I want to give you one more area of your life to consider: What about your witness unto the world in the spiritual realm? I mean, how much (and how well) do you seek to tell others about the Lord Jesus Christ? Again, quite sadly, I think we must admit that we are, often times, guilty of helping the ungodly "through our poor witness." I think we can all readily see that we sometimes fail to share the Gospel properly and consistently with others. Look at how faithful that first Church in Jerusalem was: **"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved"** (Acts 2:46-47), (See also Acts 5:41-42).

I know you will agree with me when I say this (but let me say this anyway), "The Gospel of Jesus Christ is our, and the world's best hope!" We who are Christians cannot hope to change the world or the ways of men without that the Lord would save the souls of men, and convert them, and turn them unto God. So, why do we despair so much? And, why do we spend so much time condemning the behaviors of men, peoples, societies, and governments, when we are not doing nearly enough to tell these same folks (and the world around us) about the only True Hope that men have, Jesus

Christ? One time David told Solomon, **"Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain"** (Ps. 127:1). Despite all of our best efforts, this nation will fall, except the Lord would save souls. We cannot convert evil men unto good except that the Lord would save their souls and change their hearts. We cannot expect unsaved and ungodly sinners to obey God in a willing and positive fashion; sadly, even Christians often fail in our attempts to serve and obey God. However, we can preach and pray to see souls saved, and then pray that God would use them and us to serve Him, and to convert others from their sinful ways. The Word of God, and in particular, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the best (and only) True Hope for this world, and for this nation that we live in. And you and I who are saved and you and I who are members of the churches of Jesus Christ; we hold the power of God and salvation, and the hope of the world in our hands. Just tell folks about Christ, and about the need that sinners have. Without our witness, and without the preaching of the Word, you and I cannot make any lasting or useful contribution to the world. We can say we love men, and we can say we love the Lord; but, if we do not witness of Jesus Christ, we are (outwardly, at least) failures in both of our professed loves.

CONCLUSION

Obviously, we ought not "Help the ungodly." We should not help them through silence in the face of their sins; through participation in their sins; and we should not withhold from them the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let me tell you what we should do to help them (and us) most:

we should give them the Gospel (as we have already noticed), and we should pray that God would save souls amongst the people and place in which we live. Maybe this is better than anything else that we might do to seek to change our society, government, families, or Churches. Let us just pray unto God for mercy and grace, and leave all of these things in the hands of our very capable and sovereign God.



Psalm 142

By Roy Mason
(1894 - 1978)

I want to read from the 142nd Psalm, **"I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my**



supplication. I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me."

Now there are three things that I want to call attention to in this

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Psalm 142

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passage of Scripture, and I shall mention these as I go along. The first thing is One who knows our paths, verse 3. **“When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path.”** David means by this, when I did not know what to do, did not know what was before me, did not know what to expect, thou, O God, knewest. Personally, I am glad that we do not knew the future. Perhaps there are enough difficulties and problems and troubles out there that if they were all dumped on us at once, we would be utterly crushed. Jesus said, **“Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”** I am glad that we do not have to live but one day at a time, and if you are a Christian, you can draw on God, draw on the bank of Heaven for the strength and grace sufficient for each day's needs. **“As thy days, so shall thy strength be,”** says God.

Sometimes it is good for people to be out loose from human dependence and help. We sometimes pity a boy or girl who has great responsibilities thrown on them at an early age. Many a boy suffers the loss of a father early in life, and has had to take upon himself the responsibility and care of a mother and perhaps smaller children. It is hard to shoulder the responsibility, but I have never known of a case in which it did not prove to be good for the boy in the long run. Many a person, when they depend for everything upon someone else, they come to lack any resource, any initiative. Many a son or daughter of wealthy parents would be better off if the family lost every cent in the world, and they had to get to work. It would be the very making of them. And in our lives as Christians, very often the Lord allows hardships and difficulties to come our way, so that

we may develop some character; and so we will come to look to Him for help and guidance.

The old eagle feeds the baby eaglets until they reach the age where they should begin to fly, then she pushes them out where they will exercise their wings. When they keep crawling back to the nest, she finally tears the nest up and pushes the little eaglets off the cliff, where they will have to use their wings. If it becomes apparent that the baby eagles are going to fall, then the old eagle flies underneath and catches the young eagle and bears it up. And that is exactly what David is talking about here in one of the Psalms, when it says, “He shall bear thee up on eagle's wings.” And it is exactly the same sentiment expressed in yet another place, where it says, **“And underneath are the everlasting arms.”** We never develop a strong faith, never come to trust in God as we should, until we are thrown upon His resource, until we feel that we just have to trust Him.

I remember back several years ago, we had Brother Beitzel, a missionary to Africa for the last twenty five years, off and on, and he visited me and told me that 25 years before, he and his wife went out to Africa, and they were taken by a missionary way back among a heathen tribe, and after a few days, the missionary went away and left them. They did not know the language, so they absolutely had to learn it to get along, and for over a year, they did not hear English spoken and did not see a white face. They not only had to learn the native language, they also had to trust God for just about everything. It made me think of David Livingston, who went to Africa and spent years, subjected to diseases and dangers of all kinds. When he went back to England, he was asked how he managed to get along and exist under the circumstances that he

lived under. He said there was one thing that sustained him, and that was the promise of One Who has never broken His word, and He said to him, **“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”**

For a good many years, the church I was Pastor of contributed to the work of J. R. Saunders, veteran Southern Baptist missionary to China. Brother Saunders was retired by the Foreign Mission Board back some years ago, after serving more than 30 years in China, but to be retired by the Board did not mean to him to be retired by the Lord, and J. R. Saunders carried on one of the best works of his life after he had been retired by the Board. I will never forget what Brother Saunders told me about his early experience in China as a new missionary. He went way back into China where a white face was almost unknown, and where foreigners were called “foreign devils,” and he took typhoid fever and for weeks he lay sick. There were no windows near his bed from which he could see out, but up above, there was an opening, and through that he could look up and could see the blue sky, and he said he lay there and realized that the Mighty God Who stretched that blue sky out overhead knew that he was there in that hut, knew that he was in China, for He knew all the way ahead, and that thought gave him the courage to endure those weeks of sickness. **“When my spirit was overwhelmed,”** said David, **“Thou knewest my path.”** And, listen, we Christians have a statement over here in the New Testament that is worth more than a billion dollars. What is it? It goes like this, **“For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”** It is easy to glibly roll those words off our tongue, but they were never meant as words to roll off the tongue, they were meant

as words to be believed and to be depended upon.

Suppose here is an unsaved man, and he is pretty well stocked with the things of the world, and he says to me, “What do you have as a Christian that I do not have?” He has a house, he has a car, he has good health, he has money in the bank. I can say to him, “I know one thing you do not have, you do not have Romans 8:28, **“For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God...”** and that means that the old Devil can plan and plot all he pleases, he can get me in a tight place, and then the Lord can flip a switch, so to speak, and lo and behold, every one of his plans can be made to work for my good. The Bible is just packed with illustrations of this. The Devil got Joseph sold into slavery, got him in jail, kept him there for a couple of years, but the Lord flipped the switch and made every evil of those years a paving stone to the path that led to the Prime Ministership of the land of Egypt. If you are not a Christian, you do not have a bit of right in the world to this promise given in Romans 8:28. If you are a lost church member, you do not have any right to it. When the things of life go ill for you, when sickness comes and troubles come and bereavements come, there is not one ray of light for you. I know there are a lot of unsaved people who pity us Christians, and feel superior to us, but one thing we have, we have God on our side. And the Bible says, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” **“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”** You may not think it amounts to much now, but I will tell you, when you come down to the last breath and look eternity in the face, it amounts to everything, as to whether you are

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Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of
Plant City, Florida



SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON - BIBLE SURVEY #20 THE BOOK OF RUTH

TEXT: Ruth 1:1-22

DEVOTIONAL READING: Lev. 25:47-55

AIM: Over-View of the Book of Ruth

SUGGESTED HYMN: Redeemed

INTRODUCTION: We now look at the 8th book of the Bible; the third in the Historical Section: Ruth.

THEME: Redemption. We see this in the example of Boaz, who performs the work of the kinsman redeemer and is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ in fulfilling that work when He redeems His own.

I. AUTHOR: Unknown, possibly Samuel

II. KEY CONCEPTS: There are many principles outlined in this book. They are very similar to those of the book of Judges, Ruth takes place during the time of the book of Judges (Ruth 1:1).

1. Disobedience and backsliding: Ruth 1:1-5—We find that a famine arose in the land of Bethlehem. But no commandment of the Lord had ever been given to leave the land of Israel. Likely this famine was of chastisement for disobedience (Deut. 28:15-19, 23-24), and was a call to repentance? Perhaps it was a testing from the Lord? We do NOT know. Yet what we do know is that Elimelech and his family left the promised land contrary to God's command. They never should have left the land of God's blessing, especially to Moab—who brutally treated Israel, his own kin (Deut. 23:3-6). While in the land which God cared for (Deut. 11:12), she was known as Naomi = pleasant. But after dwelling in Moab she was to be called Mara = bitter (Ruth 1:20). This happens when we disobey the Lord. Though Naomi returned it was at a great price. Her husband and two sons died in a backslidden condition (I John 5:16; Prov. 14:14; Jer. 2:19). Elimelech & Naomi left Israel because they did NOT trust the word(s) of the Lord nor the Lord Himself.

2. Salvation by Grace Through Faith: Ruth 1:8-18—Evidently, Ruth and Orpah had known of Jehovah, whether from Naomi and her family I do NOT know. Ruth believed, and in doing so followed the LORD God. Orpah did NOT believe and returned unto her own people and unto their false gods who cannot save. There was nothing that could persuade her (Ruth) to return unto the heathen gods of her fathers (Eph. 2:8-10). She becomes one of God's people. She was not satisfied to be a believer, but wanted to take part in and enjoy all the privileges of God's people (Ruth 1:14-18). Every child of God ought to be desirous to serve the God who saved them and live sitting at the feet of Jesus—enjoying all the heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus.

3. Kinsman Redeemer: Ruth 2:, 3:, 4;; Cp. Lev. 25:47-55. Here we are introduced to a man named Boaz = a type of the Lord Jesus Christ! Boaz would play the part of the kinsman redeemer. Observe,

Lev. 25:48-49 Redeem= "Goel." It indicates the redeemer (the one who pays) as well as the redemption (to free by paying). We find the act of Boaz redeeming Ruth, Naomi, and the entire house of Elimelech in Ruth 4:1-12.

There are certain qualifications to be a "kinsman redeemer".

A. Had to be kin: One must be related; in particular, a near kinsman (Ruth 2:19-20). So Christ became man that He might be qualified to redeem us (Gal. 4:4, 5).

B. Redemption: Had to be willing to redeem (Ruth 3:12,13). Not only willing to redeem, but also have the ability (Ruth 4:3-6). Only Boaz was willing and had the ability to perform the "Goel" for Naomi and Ruth. So it was with Christ who is both willing (John 1:12) and able (Heb. 7:25; Jude v. 24; Dan. 3:17).

4. Restoration: Ruth 4:13-16 (v. 15)—"he" = Boaz; "thee" = Naomi. Boaz had restored Naomi. No longer would she be called "mara" = bitter. For she had been restored from her backslidings by another: Boaz. So too, is the child of God restored by the Christ who died for him/her (I John 2:1-2).

III. DIVISIONS OF RUTH:

1. Salvation—Ruth 1:1-22—The Salvation of Ruth
2. Service—Ruth 2:1-23—Ruth Serving. While serving, Boaz saw no harm would come to Ruth, and she was provided for:
 - A. Communion: Ruth 2:8-14
 - B. Protection: Ruth 2:9
 - C. Drink: Ruth 2:9
 - D. Blessing: Ruth 2:12
 - E. Food: Ruth 2:14
 - F. Rest: Ruth 2:14
 - G. Provision: Ruth 2:15-17

So too, will the child of God today find these things when in the service of the Lord!

3. Rest—Ruth 3:1-18—Ruth resting in Boaz/Christ

4. Reward—Ruth 4:1-22—Ruth rewarded for faith in the LORD.

IV. WHAT WE DO NOT SEE IN RUTH: There are no wars mentioned in the book of Ruth. There are no laws given in the book of Ruth. There are no "miracles" performed in the book of Ruth.

V. WHAT WE DO SEE IN RUTH: Great teachings of God's grace and His truths. His mercy is found in the land of Moab. Sorrows, yet God can turn everything to good and use it to show His mercies (Deut. 29:29).

VI. TYPES IN RUTH: Boaz = Christ, the kinsman redeemer. Ruth = a gentile believer. Orpah = a gentile unbeliever. Naomi = unfaithful Israel restored by God's grace; Elimelech & sons = unfaithful Israel destroyed

(Nathaniel Hille is pastor of the Bible Baptist Church of Plant City, Florida.)





THE WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

by Isaac Sidders

Have you ever been to a 3D movie before? It likely has been quite some time since you were, but if you have, you will have endured a circumstance like what I am about to describe. You will have to go through a lot more trouble than usual. Instead of simply walking into a theater after purchasing a ticket, you will have to go get the special glasses that distort your image. At this point you might get specific instructions on when and how to use the glasses. Next is the chore of finding the specific theater that will play the distorted film that will seemingly pop out because of the glasses. At the end of this experience, many people in the theater will all likely have headaches and regret ever partaking in this strange event, but they will still probably come back. This entire miserable experience mirrors what God's people are like among the world. When His beloved elect find themselves in ungodly circumstances, Satan hands us the glasses and tells us when and how to use them. These unruly glasses block out what we are really seeing and sell us on a picture that does not actually exist. If we require these dark glasses to see things clearly, maybe we should not be seeking this thing at all.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of

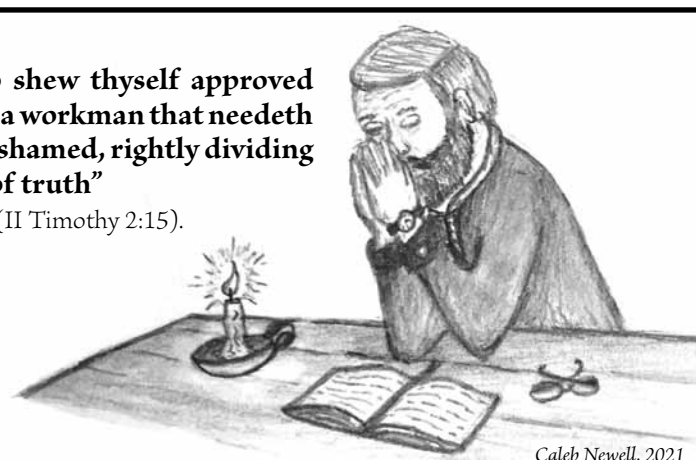
death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4). In this Scripture, David is writing describing his life from the perspective of God's safety. Why do not more Christians sound that way when they talk? We forget so often that we have been freely given the peace that surpasses all understanding! All of those whom God has saved should be speaking as such. He called us out from the world, but we still always wonder, "how far can I go?" Praise the Lord, if you are saved today, you do not have to go anywhere alone! Looking back at the verse now, David is saying that God's rod and staff comfort him, not 3D glasses. God's people do not need these complicated glasses to journey through this world, we should trust on His rod and staff to provide for us.

Let us look at our illustration again; you are walking into a movie theater. You are given the choice of two showings; one in fifteen minutes, the other is in an hour. You will likely choose the sooner one, but then you see the small print on the ticket. This small print reminds me of Satan's words in Genesis. **"And the serpent said to the woman, Ye shall not surely die"** (Gen. 3:4). That is what the glasses symbolize in our story. Satan's crafted lies through which we view this horribly distorted world around us. Our walk through the valley of the shadow of death should not be some big illusional 3D production; I do not believe that is God's path for us; instead, I think it is like Jesus says in Matthew 7, **"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"** (Matt. 7:14).



"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"

(II Timothy 2:15).



Psalm 142

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going out yonder to face God as Father, or to face God as Judge. How is it with you today? Can you claim God as Father? Can you claim Romans 8:28? Do you have One to help in the dark moments of life? Can you say with David, **"When my spirit was overwhelmed...then thou knewest my path?"**

But there is a second thing I want to call attention to in this Psalm, and it is an awful thing to say, and it is found there in verse 4, **"Refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul."** It is a dreadful thing for a man to reach the place where he feels like that, where he feels that none on earth cares a thing for him. I remember going to a hospital once to see an old fellow who had made a profession of faith under my preaching, and one of the doctors, when he learned who I had come to see, said, "What is the use of fooling away time on that old guy? Why not spend your time on somebody who is more worth-while?" I thought to myself, "Well, I am glad the Lord Jesus Christ is not like that man. I am glad that His heart is compassionate toward the illiterate and the poor and the down-and-out. Poor old blind Bartimaeus raised a clamor when he knew that Jesus was passing by, yelling at the top of his voice, **"Jesus, Thou Son of David,**

have mercy on me." The disciples said, "Shut up," but he kept crying out until Jesus said, "Bring that man to me," and He said to Bartimaeus, "What is it you want?" **"Lord, that I might receive my sight."** And poor old roadside beggar though he was, he got what he asked for, and went his way seeing and rejoicing. I am glad to say to you that when you get so low that you hit bottom, when you can perhaps truly say, "No man cares for my soul," there is yet One Who does care. The Son of God cares, and just as surely as you crawl your way up to His cross and look up for mercy, you will get up and you will not be down-and-out when Christ gets through with you.

But let me say right here that many people are mistaken when they get the notion that no one cares, that everybody is against them. There are a lot of people who indulge in self-pity. I come in touch with people every once in a while who whine about everything and everybody being against them, and when that is the case in nearly every instance, it is their own fault. Why should everybody be against us, any of us? There has to be something the matter with us when that is the case. When you feel like pitying yourself on the ground that somehow everybody is against you, just quit that business of pitying yourself and begin to look to find

♦ (Continued on page 23)

Psalm 142

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out what is wrong with you. Listen, no one ever failed to have friends who showed himself a friend, no one finds everybody unfriendly who shows himself friendly. I have heard church members complain about being sick and no one visited them, but when others were sick, they never did any visiting. If you never go to see other people when they are sick, then do not grouch and grumble because people do not come running the first time you have a bad cold or the toe ache. I have heard church members grumble about a church being unfriendly. No one shook their hand, they said, but the truth was, they never tried to shake anybody else's hand. Give of the best you have to other people, and the best will come back to you.

But sometimes people go the wrong way and they mess up their lives. They get way down where people are disgusted with them. Maybe they do reach the place where they could say, "No man cared for my soul." I want to lay this question before you Christians, "Do we care for the souls of people as we should?" But let us see. When we fail to give to missions, do we not? The person who cares for the souls of others will give to send the Gospel to them. A non-missionary church is a church that does not care for human souls, and there is no way around it. Do you know the one thing that I was proudest of concerning the church that I was Pastor of for about 30 years in Tampa? It was the fact that we preached the Gospel to more people than any church in the entire state, by means of radio and by means of missionary work. When we fail to speak about Christ to other people, that shows we do not care about people's souls. I tell you, we ought to use opportunities to speak to

people about the Lord. "No man cared for my soul." Can those you work around, can your friends and your kinfolds tell the truth and say that? No, not if you do your duty, they can not. Let me go further and say that the Minister who does not invite people to turn to Christ does not care for their souls. In thousands of church services men get up and preach and close their sermons without ever saying a word to the lost. And some churches get to the place where an invitation, outside of revival meeting time, is considered bad taste.

I had a schoolmate who went to supply for a church when we were in the theological seminary, and he preached an evangelistic sermon and invited sinners to turn to Christ, and he was taken to task at the close and told that the Minister was not supposed to do things like that, except during special evangelistic meetings. They had a closed season, apparently, on sinners. Just like they would not allow you to fish for mullet during the closed season down here in Florida, so the Preacher was to observe closed season for sinners, and was not expected to fish for them except during a certain time. My friends, it ought always be open season for sinners in our churches.

Several years ago on Wednesday night, before I got inside the house, a man who had been saved from drunkenness, said, "Could I confess Christ tonight?" I said, "You certainly can," and right there I began to give an invitation on Wednesday nights, and we had many people saved through the years at our Wednesday night services. When people attend my church, I want them to feel, "That Preacher wants to see me saved, and that church wants to see me saved."

But now the third and last thing I want to call attention to in this passage is the cry to be let out of

jail. In verse 7 it says, "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name." In this particular instance, it was a prison of trouble for David. King Saul was after him, he was hiding out in a cave, and he needed deliverance. God heard him, and gave his deliverance, too. But now, he speaks of the soul in prison. That is the condition of every person beneath the sound of my voice who is not a Christian. Bound, handcuffed, fettered. The handcuffs and fetters are different in different cases. I do not know what sort of fetters the Devil has used to hold that soul of yours in his prison house, but I do know that the Lord can knock them off and set you free, if you will trust Him to do it.

Here is an old alcoholic, his very soul imprisoned and enslaved by his habit. I see such persons often and from the depths of my heart I feel for them. A man in such clutches said to me some time ago, "The fellow who has never been in this condition does not know what a fellow is up against." Yes, I think I know something about it, I know that it takes more than human strength. Let a man feel and know that he is lost and a dirty, vile sinner in the sight of God, let him get the egotism out of him, and see and realize that he is beyond human redemption. Then let him get down before God and say, "Lord, I give up to you. I trust your Son to save me and clean me up and make a man out of me." And what will happen? I want to tell you that God will do that thing when you have no strings tied to it, flaying yourself on the mercy of God in Christ, when you trust Him with all that you have and are. With all the trust that you know how to put in Him, He will meet you with His saving grace. There never lived a sinner on this earth that the Lord could not save, if

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BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

1-1-2021 to 1-31-2021

Beginning Balance	\$1,681.38
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Berea B. C. Bookstore	63.94
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	200.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Carol Willett, Cottonwood Shores, TX	75.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Gladwin, MI	100.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC	50.00
Grace Missionary B. C. Tulsa, OK	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Joann Mills, Barbourville, KY	25.00
The Lord's B. C., Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	35.00
Mt Pleasant B. C., Cheapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Parkway B. C., Springfield, OR	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Roger Bland, Walland, TX	10.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wellington, KS	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	24.00
Anonymous	800.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Sub Total	\$3,110.44
TOTAL	\$4,791.82

EXPENDITURES:

Printing	490.00
Postage	601.02
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Dividing checks	150.00
MS Sales tax (bookstore)	63.94
Bank charge	13.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,793.92
ENDING BALANCE	\$997.90



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

1-1-2021 to 1-31-2021

Beginning Balance	\$3,027.65
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Calvary I. B. C., Sumas, WA	100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
.....	525.00
TOTAL	3,552.65
EXPENDITURES:	
WCNA-WFTA - Telesouth, MS	203.98
WCTT, KY	160.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	363.98
.....	3,188.67
Interest	+0.03
ENDING BALANCE	\$3,188.70

Psalm 142

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that sinner put himself in His hand. No! No!

“Bring my soul out of prison,” said David. Who feels like this today? I think of a man who was behind prison bars, away from his family, away from his home, away from the things he loved, and the prospect was gloomy indeed. He could not get out, the walls were high and thick, and there was no escape, but he had a friend who worked for his pardon, and that pardon was secured. What he could not do for himself, another did for him. One day this friend came to the prison and said, “I have a pardon here if you will accept it.” Did he accept it? I should say he did, and presently those great prison gates swung open, they clanged shut behind him, and he stepped out under the blue sky, out into the sweet sunlight, out where the air was clear and pure. Ah, he was free, free to go home, free to see his loved ones and friends, free to go where he pleased, free again.

Listen, the dear Son of God came from Heaven to go the bitter way of the cross that He might purchase the pardon of sinners bound in Satan’s prison house of sin. Long ago when He stood in the little synagogue at Nazareth, where He had been brought up, Jesus said, **“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”** That acceptable year of the Lord is still on, He still opens prison houses and sets at liberty them that are bruised, He still opens eyes that are blinded by sin and the God of this world, He is able to knock off your shackles,

whatever they may be, and set you free today. Do you need Him? Do you need His salvation, do you need the life eternal that He is able to give? Find your way up to His cross, then, no matter if you have to crawl, and give up to Him and trust Him and you will find deliverance for your lost, needy soul. You say, “When? Can I be saved sitting right here by my radio?” You certainly can, not by the radio, that instrument can not save you, but the Christ Whom I am proclaiming over the radio can save you, just as He saved that penitent thief on the cross, for He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Have you ever thought that the penitent thief on the cross could not do anything or go anywhere, but he could believe, and that is how a person is saved anyhow, by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what the Bible says. It does not say believe and be immersed, it does not say believe and do this or that, it says, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”**

We have a baptistery in our church, but if it should spring a leak, people would not have to wait to be saved until the leak was repaired, for water does not save, water does not help save. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The blood of His Son Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin, and if from all sin, then what

sin is left to wash away with water? So, I say you can and will be saved as you sit there listening if you will receive Christ as your Savior, for **“...to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”** We have had people saved as they listen in, all down through the years, and they have known they were saved, because the Spirit of God bore witness to their spirit that they were the children of God. Try believing and receiving Christ, now, and you will surely be saved, for God says so.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee that none ever came to Christ in this saving faith and was turned away, and that none ever trusted Christ in the sense that the Bible speaks of it, and failed to receive eternal life. We pray that some may take this step today, and that some may begin to live forever and ever. And we pray, our Heavenly Father, that Thou wilt move upon those that are Christian people, that they may be more concerned about the lost, such that they shall speak to their friends and their neighbors and the people with whom they work, about the Savior. Oh, help us to mean more to Thee than we have, as we ask it in Jesus’ Name. Amen.



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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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