

# 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*

## Mercy, Missions, and the Millennium

By Timothy J. Hille  
of Ashland, Illinois

"God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah. Let the people praise thee, O God;



let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him" (Psa. 67).

Bible themes ought to govern our lives, directing all our thinking, speaking, and behaving. This Psalm, in only seven verses,

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## The Work of Missions

By Joseph M. Sidders  
of Guntown, Mississippi

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21).

"We believe that Jesus Christ gave the New Testament church as an institution a world-wide and age-lasting commission in Matthew 28:19-20 to evangelize, baptize, and catechize; that the gospel is to be preached to every creature; that men and women everywhere are responsible to



repent; and the heathen without the gospel are lost and will be judged by the light of nature and conscience; this it is the responsibility of every New Testament Baptist Church to go forth and organize new churches of like faith and order; that it is the duty of every church to support missionaries who are sent out by

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## Yes, You Can Homeschool

By Luke Austin  
of Cadillac, Michigan

(Though this is Bible-based, it is a plea to all parents. Christian or not.)

"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. 4:4).

What does it mean when the Bible calls Satan the "god of this world?" Well, it means he has dominion over it. It means that its ways and systems, its government and authorities operate under



his sway. (All of this under the sovereign rule of Almighty God). You see, this lost world marches to the beat of Satan's drum unless God intervenes. The Bible also calls him "the prince of the power of the air." It also says that everyone walks "according to the course of this world." Who set the course? Sin and Satan.

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the

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## What We Were, What We Are, How We Came To Be What We Are

By Jim Crowder  
of Plant City, Florida

"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ"



(Eph. 2:11-13). The Amplified text of Ephesians 2:11-13 reads: "Therefore, remember that at one time you were Gentiles (heathens) in the flesh, called uncircumcision by those who called themselves circumcision, (itself a mere mark) in the flesh made by human hands. (Remember) that you were at that time separated (living apart) from Christ (excluded from all part

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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.

## Work of Missions

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the authority of an assembly of scripturally baptized believers, who meet the Bible qualifications of a missionary; who furnish a doctrinal statement, and disclosure of how mission funds are used, as they are directed by the Spirit of God and the majority vote of the whole congregation," [Berea Baptist Church Articles of Faith page 5, Article 11].

### SENDING WITH PROPER AUTHORITY

We see from our text that Jesus was a missionary to the elect of God. The word missionary implies someone being sent on a specific mission by an authority. Jesus models that perfectly for us as He appears behind closed doors to His disciples and declares (in this order) the nature of His coming, the authority for His coming, and the purpose of His coming.

Jesus was sent unto the world as the Way of Salvation. This was the general purpose for His coming. To see to the perpetuity of this mission He built His church. As He was, the church was to be also. It was local, visible and had the proper authority for which to perform the work she had been given and, being as His bride, she was to honor her Bridegroom every step of the way. That work was detailed in what we call the "Great Commission," and we see it delivered once in Matthew 28:19-20 **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."** Even in this delivery the Lord Jesus

does not fail to demonstrate the authority for which He was sent: **"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"** (Matt. 28:18).

As Jesus had declared, **"...as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."** We see here then a select group of people who had been quickened with a purpose and that they had been also equipped as the Lord breathed upon them the Holy Spirit there in John 20:23. In that verse the Lord also confirms the field for which they are being sent, that being the world of sin.

This then is the sending authority for born-again believers and we see it demonstrated for us in Acts 13:1-4 **"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus."** Here a great missionary work begins, Paul being possibly the greatest earthly missionary the world has ever seen, but it does not start without the proper authority. Note that the commission to go came through the Holy Spirit and that His message to send missionaries was first delivered to the local, visible church at Antioch. After receiving their mission, the church prayed and

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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).



## The Pureness of the Gospel

**"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:17-18).**

What is the most important message in the Bible? It is without question the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God detailed this Gospel thru the Apostle Paul, **"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures"** (I Cor. 15:1-4). This is the message of the Gospel, nothing more or nothing less, Paul said **"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received...."** Paul said this Gospel is the same Gospel that he believed and was saved by, nothing added and nothing less. God said of the Gospel thru Paul, **"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). The Gospel is the only power we as churches, ministers, pastors, have to bring the lost soul to salvation. However, without the power of the Holy Spirit our preaching the Gospel is powerless. **"For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, 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). Only God's Holy Spirit can give increase to the gospel or any message to flourish.

Paul said, **"lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."** What could make the gospel message **"of none effect,"** to add to it or take away from it? God gave us the Gospel and it is all about Jesus Christ and His glorious sacrifice of how He died to suffer our hell penalty, a debt we could never pay on our own. Adding to it in any form will only destroy the power of the Gospel message. Paul said, **"but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words..."** but why would Paul say this? Paul was very educated, a very intelligent man, he said this because the Gospel is pure in its original form. The Holy Spirit is its power, it is He that makes it accomplish anything that is accomplished. God gave us the Gospel as He wanted it preached,

adding to it cannot advance it because God gave us the complete message to preach. Therefore, the Apostle Paul refused to do anything but to preach the simplicity of the Gospel as God wrote it. Nothing we do will advance the Gospel, we cannot make the Gospel more fancy, more attractive, or more believable by changing it with enticing words. Our preaching of fear will not make a sinner repent and come to Jesus Christ seeking salvation. Only the Holy Spirit can bring a lost and condemned sinner to Jesus Christ for salvation. **"Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day"** (John 6:43-44). No choice, no decision, no change of heart, no work, no anything on our part will cause us to believe the Gospel and be saved, only God's drawing us. Jesus said to lost people, **"Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word"** (John 8:43). If they would not hear Jesus, they will not hear us.

However, it is by the Gospel message and the power of the Holy Spirit that the lost sinner will repent and come to Christ for salvation. This makes the Gospel message the most important message in the entire Bible. Jesus said, **"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"** (Matt. 6:33) because without salvation the dead and lost sinner gets no value from other doctrine. **"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"** (Mark 16:15).

## Homeschool

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**prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience"** (Eph. 2:1-2).

So then, how do you suppose its educational system is ordered? Would Satan have an educational system that points people to Christ or away? Away, of course, and we have seen the degradation of public school, particularly since the 1950s. There has been a perversion of "Separation of Church and State," which allowed Satan to remove prayer from schools. Separation of Church and State had nothing to do with getting God out of school. It had everything to do with the Church of England using State power to persecute believers. What started as getting prayer out has now all together removed God from school, from the pledge of allegiance to fairytales of evolved monkeys becoming "science."

**"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen"** (I Tim. 6:20-21).

With that foundation, we come to the motivation behind writing this; you can homeschool. Yes, you. It is possible. You see, most of us came up in the public school system. And it is a system, no doubt. It is a system that causes you to think within a framework. "My kids have to go to public school." Then enter the excuses the world has programmed into our heads. "Or they will not know how to socialize." "They will be odd." "I can not educate them myself." "I can not afford to teach

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# Work of Missions

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fasted...seeking the full will of the Lord, then they, too, gave authority and commissioned Saul and Barnabas to the work for which they had been called.

## SERVING WITH PROPER PEACE

Missionaries are not sent to overtake the world for Jesus and the gospel. They were evangelistic but not violent; they were zealous for the work of spreading the gospel, but they trusted that it would be God Who provided the increase. **"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith"** (Rom. 1:14-17). I believe we see this modeled in the early ministry of Christ as He heals those possessed of demons, even sparing the demons rather than casting forth His sovereign judgment on them. They shall not escape His sight but the message He was commissioned to deliver during His earthly ministry was that of a hope for the repentant... which can only be received through peace.

We are commanded to water and plant, even to weed in some circumstances, but in the end to trust the increase to God! After writing of the two-handed commitment required to follow after Jesus in chapter 9, Dr. Luke gives us a depiction of the Lord, with proper authority, sending

a missionary group out with the purpose of informing sinners that "The Kingdom of God is come nigh": **"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth**

**and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me"** (Luke 10:1-16).

Let us note how they were sent as **"lambs among wolves"** and they were to bear the message of **"Peace be to this house"** as they entered. What was the message that they brought? Was it not that an eternal rest was being made possible through the Messiah? They did not yet know precisely how it would be made possible, but they knew of the authority that had promised it and they were to take His message to the world! In this instruction they were not called to take anything for Christ. They were even to leave the dust (curse of death Gen 3:19) from their persons as a mark against them. They were commanded, as missionaries, to go in peace with the same message John had preached in the wilderness, **"... Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"** (Matt. 3:2).

## SAVING WITH PROPER POWER

The gospel comprises the full story of our deliverance which begins with the death and burial of Jesus (dealing with our flesh once and for all) and concludes with His resurrection (which is the imputation of His victory upon us). **"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the**

**last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? -- The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"** (I Cor. 15:50-57).

This is the gospel message that we have been commissioned to share in peace. Let us, with this final point, consider a parable: **"... Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear"** (Matt. 13:3-9). We see then that, though we are sharing a powerful message, the power is not ours to control. The proper power of the gospel is that salvation is in the hands of God!

Should this derail our message? Does it cause doubt for us to

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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).

### Grudging Grace

Theodore Beza (1519-1605) was a French Protestant theologian who succeeded John Calvin in Geneva. Before Theodore's conversion to Christ, he acted like one not converted to Christ. Imagine that, a sinner who acted like a sinner. He was a talented writer and published some popular poetry, which contained some salacious verse, and naturally, it was published and widely read. In the process of time, God graciously granted Beza the grace of repentance and faith, and when he received Christ as Saviour, he began living for and serving his Redeemer. But books do not feel remorse, and neither can they repent. So despite his change of heart, the books remained on the shelves of worldly-minded people. Demand was high for these poems, and there was a lot of money to be made in republishing. Now ashamed of the work, Beza refused to republish, despite the potential for making a ton of cash.

Beza had some enemies, including the Roman Catholic church, because of his doctrine, being a Reformer. Years after his conversion, someone dug up the amorous verse and charged him and the entire Reformation movement as worldly and wicked. I suppose any way to attack the doctrine of justification by faith and the gospel of grace. In response to his old sins and his past life used as an attack on him and his theology, he said, "These men grudge me the grace of God."

Human nature does not change. A young man wrote some foolish and sinful things in public in his youth, and later in his life, his enemies dug up dirt on him and tried to cancel him. Everyone has a past. Every Christian has sins we are ashamed of, and if you are a Christian, you have repented and renounced those sins. But the enemy grudges us the grace of God. Satan is our adversary and the accuser of the brethren. If he can, he will not give our hearts and minds a moment's peace in the mercy and pardon of God. He will dredge up old sins and rub our noses in it.

It is not hypocrisy when Beza repented then spoke against the sins of his past, it is the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification. Jesus Christ bore the sins of His people in His own body on the tree and was the substitute for sinners. Rather than me paying for my sins, Jesus paid the debt I owed. I receive His righteousness by faith and stand before God justified, clean, and pardoned. I am not a sinless man, but I have a sinless Saviour Who gave me His righteousness. I have a sovereign Comforter who sanctifies me and leads me in the path of righteousness. Trying to cancel a person for the past they left behind is the Devil's work. It does not prove Christians are hypocrites, it proves that Jesus Christ saves sinners, even the worst of sinners (I Tim. 1:12-16), and tries to begrudge a man God's grace, that saved a wretch like me.

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



## Mercy and Missions

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covers a grand spectrum of spiritual and scriptural truth. In truth, these are the grand themes that ought to guide, guard, and govern the lives of every child of God, and every member of this congregation, as long as we live upon this earth.

### Mercy

**"God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah"** (vs. 1). The first verse is the first natural division of this Psalm. These words are words that God taught the children of Israel to use, particularly the priests were to use them in blessing the people. This teaches us that there are no true blessings apart from the blessings of God; and the blessings of God are those which He has declared and described in His Holy Word, the Scriptures. **"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them"** (Num. 6:22-27).

To desire and seek the blessings that God declares and describes in His Word is to be the occupation of the hearts of His people. Many want the cheap things of this fleeting, vain, vexing life, in much the same way that swine want husks and to wallow in the mire. Let those whom God has awakened to the truth and illuminated with the knowledge of the divine, eternal, and spiritual

things of Christ crave and covet better things than the chaff and trough of this world.

**"God be merciful unto us."** Is this not the first aspect of God that we experienced, His mercy? Were we not led to it by our first true knowledge of Him and of ourselves, when we found ourselves to be sinners far off from God, and He called us by His grace to the full and free pardon for all sin and the gift of eternal life in His Son Jesus Christ, who laid down His life for us? **"God be merciful to me a sinner"** (Luke 18:13), became our heart's cry and prayer; and because He was merciful as He revealed Himself to be, He blessed us with justifying mercy, grace, and truth, reconciling peace, and heartfelt, Holy Spirit-communicated assurance. **"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life"** (Titus 3:3-7).

Having tasted that the Lord is gracious, we are constrained by the love of Christ, and we long after Him Who, in redeeming love, Who longed after us, and we desire His favor and blessing. **"God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us."** We do not

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## Mercy and Missions

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merely want to taste once of the Lord's goodness, but we now desire to abide under the shadow of the Almighty, never leaving His banqueting house of love, and always enjoying the sunshine of His face toward us. If we do not desire and delight in this now, how can we have any joyful anticipation and expectation of the life to come, when God shall be all in all, and His people shall dwell in His presence forever, beholding His face, always living in the light of His majesty and glory? That would be an absurdity, and yet we know that there are those who make absurd claims of being His people today, all the while taking no pleasure in doing His will, nor delighting in the blessings He bestows upon His faithful and obedient children and servants.

Does God save us only to later destroy us? That is the devil's lie, is it not? That, or some variation thereof, is the thought that he seeks to plant in the minds of children of God, that it is essentially of no use to serve God; to live a sober, righteous, godly life in this present evil world to forsake all and follow in the footsteps of the Lamb; to deny one's self; to denounce one's self-will and desires; to renounce the claims of others upon and over us that compete or interfere with the claims of Christ and His cross upon our hearts and lives; and to come out from among all idolatry, covetousness, ungodliness, and fellowship with falsehood, error, iniquity, and devilish influence, and be separate and sanctified unto God in body, soul, and spirit. God mercifully blessed us in saving our souls from death; He mercifully blesses us in guiding, guarding, and governing

our steps from then on; and He will mercifully bless us at the appearing and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What form does this blessing take? What are we to be asking for when we pray and sing, "God be merciful to us, and bless us"? What does the Bible teach us this means, and therefore what and how are we to think about it and understand it? **"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren"** (Gen. 49:22-26). God is the source of blessing. He is the blesser. And what manner or sort of blessings should we expect from **"the mighty God of Jacob ... the Almighty,"** Who is able to "bless thee with the blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb ... unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills"? All blessings should be sought, looked for, and expected from our great and merciful God, Who has saved us from so great a death with so great a salvation, having loved us

with so great love! The blessings of eternal things, and the blessings of temporal things. The blessings of heavenly things to come, and the blessings of earthly things in the here and now. The blessings that come from Him blessing our efforts, labors, and work, and the blessings that come from elsewhere and for which we can claim nothing except the benefit, and give Him thanks! If God is the blesser, and all blessings come from Him, then we should expect them to come by way of the channels which He has revealed to us in His Word, faith, hope, trust, humility, obedience, expectation, and whole-hearted reliance upon Him and submission to His will. We should base all our desires on this one great foundation, and look for all of our blessings to flow from this one great fountain and source, His everlasting mercies. We ought to reason thus, that if He has been so richly and immeasurably merciful to us in saving us by the shed blood and unfailing intercession of His own dear Son, then He will surely richly and unceasingly bless us with all that is good and perfect. Do not all things in the visible realm of His creation testify to that fact, that He is good, and doeth good, and means to do us good?

**"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"** (Eph. 1:3). Again, this points us to the source of, and also the nature of, all our blessings. They are from **"the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,"** the same Who loved us with such love that it can only be said, **"For God so loved,"** (John 3:16). His love is manifested, openly displayed and demonstrated, love. **"In**

**this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him,"** (I John 4:9). His love was in harmony with and working together with His mercy. **"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins"** (I John 4:10). And they are not merely blessings of things in this life, but even more so of the life to come, being **"spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."** **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time"** (I Pet. 1:3-5). The blessings that worldly men and women crave in this life end in this life; but the blessings of God, that are according to His mercy, upon those who seek Him by faith, are going to be yet greater and greater in the life to come than even the chief blessing received now in this life, **"...and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind"** (Isa. 65:17).

**"...and cause his face to shine upon us..."** Ah, here is the chief blessing and experience of God's mercy, living in His smiling favor! The abounding, all-sufficient, good hope producing-and-maintaining grace of the merciful and gracious God is the true blessing indeed. He may grant the wicked their desires for a time, and it may seem to our feeble, frail, fault-prone, forgetful

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# Moderate Steps

By Paul Stepp of  
Indore, West Virginia

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD:  
and he delighteth in his way." (Psalm 37:23).



## Trusting God

**"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved"** (Psa. 55:22).

Following God, and serving Jesus Christ, is not always easy in this life that we live. This verse from the Psalmist lets us know that there are burdens that we must bear, because he says, **"Cast thy burden upon the Lord."** However, in the very next breath, we find the comfort and the strength that we need while carrying our burdens: **"...and He shall sustain thee."**

We know that the Psalmist is speaking of the saved because he says (of God), **"...He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."** So, it seems that those who would live their lives in a righteous fashion shall have a burden to bear, but the Lord will sustain us, as we cast that burden upon Him.

Additionally, the future is confirmed and certain, for these who are given unto Him, because the Lord God will not allow them to be moved or taken away from Him. We trust in God to save us, and we trust in God to keep us.

I hope it is not your own righteousness that you are trusting in today; but rather the righteousness that is found in Jesus Christ. **"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having**

**mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith"** (Phil 3:8-9). We cannot save ourselves – we are sinners, and we have no righteousness with which to justify ourselves before God. We, as sinners, must repent of our sins and trust in Jesus Christ to save us. He will pay the price for our sins, and He will give us of His righteousness and present us before God the Father as justified saints of God.

It is a pleasant thought, and very comforting to our souls, to know that, while the world and this present Age continues, our salvation is sure and certain because it rests not in ourselves or in the power of any man, but in the Person and the Work and the Righteousness of Jesus Christ.

(Paul Stepp is pastor of the Indore Baptist Church of Indore, West Virginia.)



## Mercy and Missions

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minds that they are being blessed indeed; but upon them His face does not shine. He holds them in contempt. He blesses them only to blast them. He grants them their desires so that they may pursue their own undoing thereby. They are no better, but only become worse; whereas those upon whom He causes His face to shine are not only blessed now, but shall be blessed hereafter. He forsakes them not, because they live in the sunlight of His face. Many

want to live in the sunlight, but they care not whether God's face shines upon them. They mistake getting their own way for living in God's way. They **"...therefore do greatly err"** Mark 12:27 (Read Psalms 4:3-8; 31:13-16; 80:1-7). The favor of God, His taking pleasure in and delighting in us, is all. Let it be all to us. Let it be life, because in His favor is life to be found and enjoyed. Let it be joy and happiness to us, because in His favor is fullness of joy forever more. Let it be our pleasure and our delight to be found pleasing in His sight, and to have Him delight in us.

This Psalm does not end here; but this is the beginning. If we have not tasted that the Lord is gracious, and we do not live by His mercies and favor, how can we possibly hope to tell others of Him and point others to His bountiful goodness and grace? There is a proper pause and rest at the end of this first verse; and well we should be still and meditate upon these truths before we move on. And move on we will, if we meditate upon them aright, because such mercy and grace and blessing will be more than can be kept locked up inside of us, but will overflow and flow out from us, that others may also be blessed.

### Missions

Both the recognition of divine mercies received and experienced, and the subsequent desire for new and continuing mercies and blessings based in the favor and delight of our Savior and God, will prove to be motivation for mission-minded thinking and living. **"That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations."** Everywhere the saving and healing power of God is needed. Once we have seen and known for ourselves that salvation, deliverance,

healing, help, blessings, benefits, favor, and goodness that are all of God and are the products and outworking of His grace and mercy, then all other resources and strivings by other means than His appointed and gracious means ought to be forsaken. Can not each of us say emphatically and happily that we have learned by faith and by experience, **"My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth"** (Ps. 121:2)? **"Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's"** (Ps. 103:1-5)? If others cannot and do not, surely the members of this congregation can and should and will, seeing that we have had so very many occasions to raise up our Ebenezers and declare, **"...Hitherto hath the LORD helped us,"** (I Sam. 7:12).

Surely this is a gospel and evangelistic theme being expressed by the Holy Spirit through the Psalmist: **"That thy way may be known upon the earth, thy saving health among all nations."** Do we desire new, fresh, as well as continued and expanded, mercies and blessings, more grace, for this reason, that the Gospel may go forth unto all people, and sinners be healed of their sin-sickness, their devil-induced blindness, their profane speech impediments, their deafness to the truth, and their disabilities toward all that is godly and praiseworthy, and

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## Mercy and Missions

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rather that they may be healed to the praise of God through the name of Jesus? Do we want others to know and walk in that way which we have come to trod, by God's grace, the way of truth and righteousness, the old path wherein is the good and right way, where the footsteps of the Good Shepherd and Bishop of our souls may be seen and followed? Do we desire that others may know our Savior, and do we crave grace to be able to witness to them, to live as becometh the Gospel before them, and to support the spread of the Gospel to them, wheresoever they may be **"upon the earth"** and **"among all nations"**?

**"Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee."** This is both a means and an outcome. We who have tasted that the Lord is gracious should praise Him; and others, by our gospel efforts, should come to praise Him, having tasted and seen for themselves that He is gracious. **"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy"** (I Pet. 2:9-10). Before you were saved you did not praise God or live in a way that was praiseworthy of God. Now you should not only praise Him and do that which will work out for His praise, honor, and glory; but you should both desire and work for that same end to be fulfilled in others.

When the Gospel is preached and believed in any place, and

a church of God established, what occurs? God is praised. An house of worship unto God is setup. Lives are transformed for God's honor and glory. The praise of God ascends up from that part of the inhabited globe where before God was unknown or blasphemed, or both. **"Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him"** (Isa. 56:7-8). **"Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost"** (Rom. 15:15-16).

**"O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah."** Is this not the truth that is communicated to the inhabitants of all **"the nations upon earth"** wheresoever the Gospel is preached, that **"God... now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead"** (Acts 17:30-31)? John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles all preached, **"The time**

**is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel"** (Mark 1:15). God is now openly making known unto all people that His Son Jesus Christ shall rule and reign over all, and that you must gladly receive Him this very moment, or you will be found His enemy when He comes to judge the world in righteousness and rule over all the nations.

There is a pause at the end of this division of the Psalm; and once again, it would be wise, good, and profitable to be still and consider all that these verses have said. Are we living as becometh the Gospel? Are we faithful witnesses for Him, giving out the true gospel report, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners? Are we watchful and prayerful, looking to ourselves so as to be on guard against error and folly and going astray; and looking to our lives to see that they conform to His will Who has sent us as He was sent by the Father; and looking out upon the fields and committing ourselves to the labor that is before us, putting our hands to the plow, and not looking back? Is our "missions program," our evangelistic effort, our fulfilling of the Great Commission, lining up with the instructions and example of Christ and the apostles? Let us also consider, is our joy in the Lord? Is His joy our strength? Do our lives give off the sweet fragrant aroma of the cross of Jesus Christ and the sacrifice that He made of Himself that is so well-pleasing to God and so life-and-soul-saving unto men? Like the prophet Job asked, **"How hast thou helped him that is without power? how savest thou the arm that hath no strength? How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom? ... To whom hast thou uttered words? and whose**

**spirit came from thee?"** (Job 26:2-4). Put another way, "Is my life one of praise to God, and one by which others may be brought to also praise Him for His saving grace and mercy?"

If you were paying attention, you noticed that the outlook of the Psalmist was forward looking as regards to time, or in other words, toward the future. **"... for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth."** This is yet future. Is not the Gospel a message that pertains to the future? It warns of coming judgment and announces a coming King. **"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come"** (I Thess. 1:5-10). Is the Gospel not received by faith, which is to say, that the person who believes is believing God about things that are unseen but which God says shall come to pass? The Gospel promises that those who flee their sins and flee

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# Mercy and Missions

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to Christ shall have eternal life. When shall they have it, or rather, when shall they experience it in its reality and fulfillment? In the future, when Christ comes. The Gospel promises and prophecies that the Christ who died on Calvary and rose again is coming again in power and great glory. When shall He come? In the future, at an hour when ye think not. **"For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man"** (Heb. 2:5-9). We do not yet see all things in subjection to Christ, and He enthroned as judge and governor of the nations. When shall we see all things under His feet? In the future. And so, our outlook needs to be forward looking, toward the fulfillment of God's prophetic promises and warnings.

## Millennium

This brings us to the third and final division of this Psalm, found in the last three verses of our Bibles. **"Let the people praise**

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# Heavenly Hymns

"...Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:18-20).

## He Delivered Me

Timothy John Hille

Piano

1. Once I was lost in sin, A slave to the hate with-in,  
2. As I walk the pil - grim path, I face the temp - ter's wrath,  
3. One day His face I'll see, The Christ who died for me,

A pawn of Sa - tan's whims, No hope my out - look dim; But He de - liv -  
The flesh a - gainst me wars, So I sing a - long my course Je - sus de - liv -  
As I view His hands and feet, I ev - er shall re - peat, This is Christ who died

- ered me, Je - sus Christ de - liv - ered me From chains He set me free  
- ers me, He in - ter - cedes for me, From chains He sets me free  
for me, Bore my sins u - pon the tree, By his blood He ran - somed me,

New life He gave to me; For all e - tern - it - y My song shall e -  
He re - news His life in me. He keeps me day and night, He leads me in  
From sin and death He set me free. He claimed me as His own, Names me at His Fa -

- ver be That He de - liv - ered me, Je - sus Christ de - liv - ered me!  
the fight He ad - vo - cates for me, Je - sus Christ de - liv - ers me!  
- ther's throne, By grace and love de - creed, Je - sus Christ de - liv - ered me!

## Mercy and Missions

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**thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.**" This line is repeated, much as lines are repeated in the hymns and spiritual songs that we sing. Grand truths and exhortations to godliness and virtue deserve to be repeated. Is this really much different from that New Testament exhortation and instruction, **"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice"** (Phil. 4:4)? With regard to this, **"Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee,"** be sure that you are found obeying and fulfilling it until the Lord comes. If no others seem to be praising your great God and Savior, be sure that you are. It would be worse than silly to say that you desire for others to praise God while you do not praise Him yourself. As we saw in another Psalm already, **"Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name,"** (Ps. 103:1). If we believe that every knee shall one day bow and every tongue shall one day confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father, then let us be confessing so daily by both lip and life.

**"Then."** Again, we see that this refers to a future time. When God judges the people righteously and governs the nations, and all the people are made to praise Him, as the Gospel foretells and forewarns, **"Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us."** Sin and the tempter are said to waste the earth. But when Jesus rules and reigns in righteousness and peace over all the earth, **"then shall the earth yield her increase."** Only the One who was made a curse for us on the cross can lift the curse and its

effects from off the earth. There was once in the past a prevailing teaching, a false one, that taught that through the spread of the "social gospel," the earth would be converted back into the paradise that was lost when man sinned in the garden. No, beloved, the Bible does not teach so. This world will continue on its downward course, driven onward by the devil and his false ministers, until the Lord Jesus Christ directly intervenes from heaven, and comes as King of kings and Lord of lords (Read Psalm 72). **"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God"** (Amos 9:11-15). These times of great peace, prosperity, and plenty will be fulfilled as the prophets foretold them when Jesus reigns over all the nations for a thousand years, and sits upon the throne of His father David, judging and governing the earth.

**"...and God, even our own God, shall bless us."** There is a

hint here of the restoration of Israel. During the Old Testament, they disavowed God, and God temporarily disowned them. They looked to other gods, even the idols of the heathen nations, and worshipped them, seeking help, health, and deliverance from them. When they return to the Lord, and own Him again and are reclaimed by Him, He will bless them. He will again be known and confessed by them as **"our own God."**

**"God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him."** We look forward to that great day! Today we can go from one end of the earth to another, and we will hear God's name blasphemed and taken in vain. When Jesus sits upon the throne of His glory, **"all the ends of the earth shall fear him"** (Read Rev. 19:11-16; 20:1-6).

If **"God shall bless us,"** ought we not to desire to be blessed of Him? If **"all the ends of the earth shall fear him,"** ought we not even now to obey that instruction to **"work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,"** (Phil. 2:12)? **"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear"** (Heb. 12:28).



## Work of Missions

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confess that we know not who will be saved? To answer this, we must again remind ourselves of Whom it is we preach...that is Christ Jesus our Lord! **"Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld**

**your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead"** (Acts 17:22-31).

This is our gospel then, a declaration of God and the mercy He has chosen to share with His elect through the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. Of Whom I declare unto you today as the only Way of Salvation. It is therefore not the fear of being left in our sinful

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## Work of Missions

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states but the hope of being born-again that we preach. Our own works of faith and walks of righteousness should speak as our missionary banners to the One Who has made it possible and through such should God be glorified. **"...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"** (John 1:29).

Our conclusion is that each point is dependent on the rest: **"...if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 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? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things"** (Rom. 10:9-15). We see here again the missionaries need to go, in peace, unto all the nations **"teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I [Jesus (as our authority) has] ...commanded..."**



## Homeschool

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my kids and not work." These are all false.

If you think homeschooled kids cannot socialize, come meet mine. They will talk your ear off. Homeschooling is much more popular than you might think. There are homeschooling groups and sports that are offered in areas like Traverse City and Grand Rapids. I think Big Rapids may have some groups as well. Listen I understand there are bad apples. A few have given a bad name to homeschooling because that is not what they did. They just kept their kids home and neglected them. This is not the norm among homeschooling parents. But of course, they are the few that you hear about. I can introduce you to whole communities of homeschooled children that are extremely intelligent, courteous, well behaved, great kids.

If you think they will be odd, or will not fit in, ask yourself, do you want them to "fit in" to this mess? Do you want them thinking the way this divided country does? This division and warring ideologue country we live in is a direct result of our educational system. Kids are programmed not how to think for themselves but what to think, and when it does not fit the preprogrammed framework? Fireworks. All kids are sent out of the school system with a predisposition towards that school's political ideology. There may be exceptions but as a whole, the kids are conditioned.

If you think you can not educate them yourself, yes, you can. Homeschooling curriculum is pretty simple. Now I am not the primary educator in our home and I am not saying that my wife has it easy. But the curriculum comes

with a teacher's edition. And with the ability to access the internet for help today, you have all the resources you need. Plus, you can find others who homeschool to help you along the way.

If you think you can not afford it, yes, you can. It is a simple matter of priority. New cars or safe kids? I know that may seem too simple, but it is that simple. People can live on less, for the most part, they choose not to. You do not need both parents working to pay the bills unless there are many unnecessary bills.

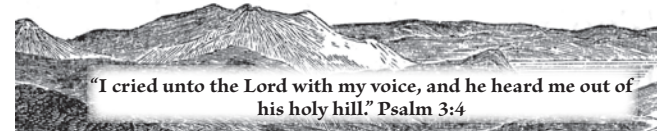
People would be shocked to know what my family lives on in this modern day. But we do not have Netflix. We do not drive vehicles with payments. No new stuff, and a much happier home. We do not live on government assistance. It is possible. But you must be willing to part with the extras.

You see, I hear about things like what happened at Oxford. I hear about things like schools shutting down over threats. I hear about hazing and bullying. And what do our educators do? They

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## Selahs

By Tomas Julius G. Salacup  
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Vallejo, CA



### Drawing His People

**"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ"** (Eph. 2:11-13).

Paul says here circumcision is "done" and "made" by hands. We know that circumcision involves blood. That is why it sealed the covenant of God with Abraham. No covenant was ever made without blood.

In contrast of the new covenant salvation, it involves the blood of Christ, and circumcision was "made." It did not say "was made

by the blood of Christ and the will of man." Only Him and His blood, or else the analogy would be destroyed. The verses are very clear, and yet can not be accepted by those who insist on man-made decisions for Christ.

Here we see that the shed blood has only one reason, to draw those who are far, meaning the Gentiles. If Christ shed His blood for them, they will be made nigh to God. So in no way did He shed His blood, and not make these people come close to God. He cannot fail on this.

We learn then, that Christ's blood, if it is to propitiate, it must not only appease, **"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world"** (I John 2:2) God's wrath, but also to His people and to His Father, so effectual that it can never miss the design and purpose of His shed blood. Selah!



# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. I remember one article of the Berea Baptist Banner in the past dealing with Jesus going to hell when He died. Can you explain how this might be possible?

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I believe, that as there are two births for God's elect **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again"** (John 3:6-7), so, too, are there two deaths to be aware of in Scripture, mandated by the sin of Genesis 2:17 **"...for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."** First is the physical death, that ended his life 930 years later, but the second death is spiritual, as he and Eve immediately "died" to God spiritually, which is the ultimate death of eternal separation from God: **"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death"** (Rev. 20:14). Selah! Think about it!

To rescue us from both the 1) penalty and 2) presence of death, Jesus Christ had to die two deaths also. Both rescue operations took Him into that place called Hell. The liberation from the 1) penalty of death took place on the cross of Calvary. As the Lord Jesus fulfilled each prophecy in dying for our sins, it penultimately came time for Him to suffer our Hell for us, and at the stroke of noon on that terrible day the lights went out, because Hell came to Calvary to consume our Lord.

During those horrific three hours of darkness, the Messiah was made **"...to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"** (II Cor. 5:21). An infinity of the tortures of Hell await every sinner, but because of unconditional election, the Lamb of God in particular redemption took the "literal sins" of every lost sheep and the "death payment" that was required of us was laid upon the Son of God! **"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. 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?"** (Matt. 27:45-46).

At this point, I always tell my congregation that God turned His back upon the Son of God, and forsook Him, so that we would never be forsaken! Because God cannot look upon Sin, Jesus' communion with the Father and the Spirit (My God and My God) were both broken for the only time in history. **"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity"** (Hab. 1:13). As Jesus plunged into the torments and darkness of Hell, He was forsaken and "alone"... it was truly awful that every dread aspect of an eternal Hell must be experienced and endured for our penalty of death to be expiated by the Saviour! I think we undervalue what our Friend did for us in those three hours of darkness, when He went to Hell to substitute Himself

for us! **"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me"** (Psa. 66:18). And in suffering the second death of infinite separation, the Father could not even hear His only begotten Son, as He miraculously took and regarded our sins, as His own penalty... selah! Think about it!

Think of it! The sinless One in Hell **"...Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched"** (Mark 9:44). Experientially the Son of man **"...hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: ...stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ...he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed"** (Isa. 53:4-5). No dipping of His toe into Hell, but our Saviour was immersed in the perils, tortures and unimaginable depths of agony that left His physical body as wasted as the picture seen in eternity future thru a somber window from Heaven to Hell in Isaiah 66:23-24, **"And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases (unrecognizable bodies!) of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."** Can you imagine the worms devouring our beloved Bridegroom? An eternity of death's worth of God's holiest punishment condensed upon His holy person unto three hours of agony? No wonder the prophet describes the prudent Servant in such vivid terms as **"...his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men"**

(Isa. 52:14). No crucifixion, no matter how horrible or lingering could leave such a devastated mark upon a man's visage but the exponential horrors of Hell could... Yes, He was marred more than any man, because no man had ever undergone and exited that terrible place called Hell... But Jesus went there for you and me, as propitiation for our deserved wages of sin, eternal death and separation from God and He emerged victorious! Selah! Think about it! **"It is Finished!"** was the second shout from the cross! Oh, may we now see the Hellish depths of that shout, delineating for us His emergence from Hell's worst cruelty!

The second aspect of Christ's work was to deliver us from the physical threat and the very presence of death! **"For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption"** (Psa. 16:10). After the work of the atonement during the Hellish three hours, Christ came back **"I Thirst!"** How completely desperate is that terrible place! But there was more work to be done. The physical death that faces every member of Adam's race must also be conquered! **"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"** (I Cor. 15:26). The Lord that had survived His first venture into eternal Hell is about to physically enter the Grave/Pit/Sheol/Hades to complete His victory as our substitutionary sacrifice of His eternal life over our eternal death! **"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost"** (Luke 23:46).

The Lord did not swoon, but again He literally and experientially tasted the death/

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## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What place does Christian fiction have in your lives (books or movies)?

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I have actually written quite a bit of Christian fiction over the years. To present the truths of God's Word in both historical and modern settings can be a very valuable tool for learning and garnering wisdom, which is literally experiential knowledge. Jesus, Himself, utilized two main premises of Christian fiction. Selah! Think about it!

**"Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ...And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day..."** (Matt. 11:20-24). The first premise of fiction is presenting a story of "what might have been." There are many choices we all make in our lives, and many times it is very good to reflect on how different our lives might have been had we made different choices at those important crossroads in our lives. Christian fiction

allows us to explore those varied and virtually limitless possibilities! Many a movie has been shot and books have been written to tell those stories about "what might have been" if Sodom (or the novel's heroine) had repented and changed the scripts of time!

Two interesting tales of the Old Testament probe this tenet of "What might have been" for Kings Jeroboam and Joash. **"And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph. ...for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: ... And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee"** (I Kings 11:28,31,37-38). This "alternate reality" never happened for Jeroboam because he faithlessly neglected these premises of God and feared that Rehoboam would re-capture the hearts of the Israelites. So this ultimate coward built two golden calves for his subjects to worship! But what if he had! What a story could have been told of this hero of Israel forever!

Christian fiction tells such stories, so that we are moved to greatness and faithfulness, just as much so as when we read the non-fiction stories of Jephthah and Jael! Selah! Think about it!

King Joash, likewise, is used by Elisha to give us an opportunity to see "What Might Have Been" for him. When Elisha gives the King the quiver of arrows, he tells him to "Smite upon the ground..."! After Joash smites the ground thrice, Elisha gives a glimpse of an Alternate History, once again! **"And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice"** (II Kings 13:19). What a "fictional" story that would make! But it was clearly possible, and even desirable by God's faithful prophet, was it not?

The second aspect of Christian fiction that the Lord Jesus used extensively was parables. "It could have happened this way." In fact, in truth, it many times does happen this way to various, but also "certain men/women"! Selah! Think about it! "The Prodigal Son" or "Lost Sheep" and coins of Luke 15 make very good Christian fiction! Directed and produced by Jesus Christ! The "Unjust Steward" or the "Avenged Widow" are also awesome forms of Christian fiction mass marketed by Jesus, the Storyteller!

Christian fiction has the power to capture or develop lessons of wisdom, faith and love portrayed in either fictional characters, or attributed in artistic license to historical persons. Lessons of comfort and courage are accomplished as skillful writers lead their created protagonists through trials or joys. A word

of caution when you dive into the Christian fiction of modern America. There is a lot of Arminianism out there! Please watch (and read) with that in mind, and as Bro. Tom Ross often says, "Eat the fish and spit out the bones!" Selah! Think about it!

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Let me begin by pointing out that my intentions are not to cast railing accusations or to in any other way offend by the following answer to the question presented. My intention is simply to cause us to think about our approach to the subject of Christian fiction. This is a very good and pertinent question as it seems that the genre is growing and becoming more popular, which raises red flags in the mind of the writer. I will lead into this by stating that I do not partake of the genre for reasons I will bring out in the following response.

The Bible states in Exodus 20: 1-7 **"And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto**

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## Forum Question #1

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separation of spirit and body, leaving an empty tabernacle upon the old, rugged cross. As His body was buried in a borrowed tomb, it was like every other funeral casket, where the preacher will remind us, "That is just the body of Jesus, He is not here anymore..." So where was the Lord during those 72 hours that His body was buried and empty? He went to Hell and then to Heaven! **"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things)"** (Eph. 4:8-10).

Christ, our Saviour descended into the lowest parts of the earth (Greek- Tartarus) and led captivity captive, Hallelujah! **"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"** (Heb. 2:14-15). Just as He literally came to this earth to personally seek and save those that were lost, so He literally went to Abraham's bosom and collected those captured by death, the last enemy, and ascended up into glory with His prize! **"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached (Good News!) unto the spirits in**

**prison"** (I Pet. 3:18-19).

David goes a little deeper into the matter in Psalm 68:18,20, **"Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive:... and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues (escapes) from death."** The issuing forth symbolizes those "escaping" from death! Notice that Christ the Lord, does not liberate the captives here, in the sense of just letting them go! He takes captivity "captive"! We belong to Him, now, praise God! We are His trophies! **"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it"** (Col. 2:14-15). No powers of the devil and death, Hell and the grave could prevent the Saviour from "gifting" them with their freedom to serve their new Master with love, joy and adoring worship! **"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death"** (Rev. 1:18). Praise His name! Selah! Praise His name!

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I am not sure which article you are referring to, but I will do my best to answer the question. I believe that when Jesus Christ bore the sins of His people in His body on the cross, He suffered the full weight and penalty of the law on their behalf. This would mean that Christ as our substitute suffered the equivalent of what

we personally deserved if we had died in our sins and ultimately were assigned our place in the Lake of Fire. Revelation 20:10, 14-15 state: **"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever...And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."** It is clear from Scripture that the Lake of Fire is the eternal abode of infinite torment for all unbelievers who remain in their sins to suffer unutterable woe as the eternal ages roll. The only difference between me and those who die in their sins is simple. Jesus Christ bore my sins and the debt I owed to the penalty of the law while He was on the cross. **"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed...For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit"** (I Pet. 2:24; 3:18). My sins, along with the sins of all the elect who are brought to faith in the Gospel, were imputed to Christ, charged to His account whereby He offered His perfect life, obedience, merits, and precious blood as a vicarious sacrifice and substitute. The offering of His spotless life and precious blood, ending in death on the cross is what satisfied the justice of God and the penalty of the law on behalf of the elect. Christ suffered the second death in my stead on the cross so that I can enjoy the glories of eternal life in the

presence of God. Hebrews 10:12-14 states: **"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."** When Jesus cried out **"It is finished"** on the cross it signified that His sacrificial work had been completed. He had suffered all that God required for the sins of His people while on the cross. He died, was buried, and rose again to give eternal life to all that the Father had given Him.

How is it possible that Christ could suffer the equivalent of the Lake of Fire on behalf of the multitudes of God's elect, suffering vicariously for each and every one? Only Christ is qualified to offer such an efficacious sacrifice because He is of infinite worth. Christ is the lamb slain from the foundation of the world (I Pet. 1:18-20). His perfect humanity was formed to accomplish a task of such monumental and eternal importance. **"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the**

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# Forum Question #1

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**offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**" (Heb. 10:5-10). How was it possible? God the Father made it possible in appointing Christ to die in the stead of His people before the world began (Acts 2:21-24). Jesus Christ, the eternally begotten Son of God, made it possible by becoming a man, living a perfect life, dying as a perfect sacrifice in the stead of His people, and rising from the dead (Phil. 2:5-11). God the Holy Spirit made it possible by imparting life to dead sinners in regeneration and giving them grace to repent and believe the Gospel (I Thess. 1:4-6) and by effectually calling them to embrace that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again for them personally (II Tim. 2:9-11). The Holy Trinity, working together in sacred harmony, accomplished it all!

I will leave the philosophical implications of the question to others. I am glad to humbly receive the plain declarations of Scripture about the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus. He suffered, bled, and died on the cross for the sins of His people, and when He had completely satisfied the law's demands and propitiated the Father's wrath, He victoriously shouted, **"It is finished."**



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**"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every**

**man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him"** (I Pet. 3:16-22).

Many religious heresies, and frankly, blasphemous statements have been made by men (and women) from treacherous and damnable interpretations of passages from God's Word, verses, or even a single word. The Word of God says what it says, and it does not say what it does not say. That being the case, the Word of God is consistent, holy, God-honoring, and true. If, then, the Word of God says that sinners deserve the wrath of God, then it is true for "all" men. If it is true that the Lord Jesus Christ shall save His people from their sins, that means "all" of them. It is unreasonable to assign

an attribute of God, or describe a work of God in one part of the Bible, when every other part of the Bible describes an opposite work or attribute.

In the passage noted above, the central theme is "godly living." The encouragement toward believers is that, as Christ truly lived a Godly life and suffered unto death, the children of God, though not suffering for sin, could also expect sufferings in this life while serving the Lord. The outcome, then, as Christ took part in death and the resurrection, being now "gone into heaven," that in our physical baptism into the Lord's local church we have and display hope in the resurrection of God.

In the midst of this encouragement, a strange thing is stated in I Peter 3:19 **"By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison."** This has to mean "something," but it can not mean something contrary to the Word of God. Please consider the following.

And Jesus said unto him, **"Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise"** (Luke 23:43). We can know with certainty that Christ did not lie. Both of them, in their death, were in paradise. This place cannot be in the heavenly presence of God the Father, for Christ had not yet ascended to that place (John 20:17). It was also not a measure to "complete" the work of salvation, as the Lord had already cried, **"...It is finished..."** (John 19:30). It is then understood to be that blessed place and dwelling of the redeemed prior to the resurrection. Luke 16 tells the readers of "Abraham's bosom," a place where Abraham and Lazarus dwelt in one station, and a "certain rich man" also dwelt in "torments" in another station, yet with a "great gulf" between. We

know the literal body of Christ was put in the "ground" at His death (Matt. 27:60) and stayed there until the resurrection three days later (Luke 24:1-3). So, in summary on this point, the body of Christ is in the ground, the "soul" of Christ was in "paradise," and neither place was in the "ascended place" of God the Father.

We can also gather from the text in I Peter 3 that the Lord preached unto "disobedient souls" in "prison." Logically, what was the end of that preaching? Was it a message of salvation? No! those that died in disobedience have no second chance. The Lord is not petitioning one last time, trying to convince the souls of disobedient sinners. This would make no sense. There is no/none/zero/nada biblical evidence that God saves sinners after their death, redeems them from the judgment once passed thereto, or has any intention to. If such were the case, a "final decision" would certainly be spoken of in Revelation 20 in relation to the White Throne judgment, right? Reader, no such thing is true.

What, then, is this preaching? Please consider Romans 1:16-17 **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH"** (emph. JN). Simply, dear reader, in the Gospel, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, the righteousness of God, or the right-wise-ness of God is revealed. Meaning, God, being just in all things, is "just and right" to judge sinners who are subject to death because of sin. This is so,

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## Forum Question #1

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as demonstrated in the preaching and declaration of Christ in prison, being made in the likeness of man (Heb. 2:14-17), knowing no sin, yet became sin (II Cor. 5:21), and this being made evidenced to those in "prison," having both subjected Himself to the effects of the curse, even death.

Go back and read the passage, dear reader. The context is clear. It is an encouragement for the believer to live a "God-honoring" life. It is a passage to encourage the believer to have hope in the resurrection, as Christ has led in the matter. It is a passage that declares the righteousness of God; for the believer, that Jesus Christ has substituted for our offenses, and for the unbeliever, that God is right to judge, in that He spared not His own Son (Rom. 8:32), showing Himself evident unto those souls in prison.

Please, reader, do not be persuaded by nonsensical heresies. The body of the Lord went from the cross of Calvary to the grave for three literal days and nights. The "soul" of the Lord went to "paradise" as He promised in the day of His death to join His child as He promised. Once resurrected, the living, breathing, eating, and drinking, "risen" Son of God ascended unto the Father. The hope of the believer is that they will forever be with their risen Savior for eternity! Yes, the Lord did "go into prison," and that to testify of the righteousness of God displayed in the Gospel. It was not to save those who were already in judgment, but as a proof of their sinfulness, and display the absolute righteousness and holiness of God. Have faith in God, and put "no" hope in a "second chance" preaching of the

gospel after death, for there is no such occasion unto salvation. Repent "in this life," believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved.

May the Lord bless.



## Forum Question #2

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**the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.**" My primary focus in this will be verse 7; for it reveals we are not to take the name of the Lord our God in vain. According to Webster's 1828 Dictionary the word vain means in this passage: to use the name of God with levity or profaneness. My thoughts come from the first part, with levity.

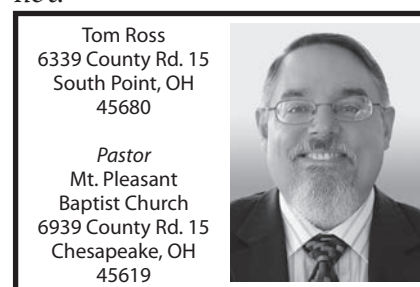
Based on my experience both in books, tv, and movie format, most modern works of Christian fiction present God as all loving, "wanting" to save everyone, and reliant upon man to decide to follow Him. Such presentations of God rob Him of His Sovereignty, therefore present, in the writer's opinion, a God whose name has been used in vain. I will interject here, however, that older works tend not to present God as such.

In addition to what I have stated already, I wish to point out the words of our Savior in John 17:17, **"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."** Also, John 8:32, **"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."** I am not trying to say we ought not to partake of recreational reading or movies, however, I will say that the time would be better spent in the truth

of God's Word. The word fiction reflects a lack of truth, made up story, or fable. As a Christian, we should give ourselves to study of the truth.

With that in mind, it is my sincere prayer that we the children of the most High God will, serve Him in sincerity and truth. Paul wrote in Romans 13:14, **"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."**

These works that are pleasant and appealing to the flesh and to the world but lack truth are, in my opinion, not necessary in the life of the saint. There are numerous works that deal with the truth of God's word we can and should avail ourselves to rather than partaking in that which benefits not.



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I must confess that I have spent very little time reading Christian fiction or watching Christian fiction movies. If I have free time apart from sermon preparation and study, homeschooling two grandkids, pastoral and family responsibilities, gardening, and canning, I love to read biographies of all kinds, especially Christian biographies. It is not that I am against Christian fiction for any particular reason. It is just not something that greatly interests me.

With that said, I remember reading a Christian fiction novel by Richard Belcher entitled *A Journey in Grace: A Theological Novel*, years ago that was outstanding. I googled the

author's name and found out that he now has an entire series of 18 Christian fiction novels on a variety of subjects. It is extremely rare for me to be in complete agreement with human authors, so please do not take this as a blanket endorsement of the entire series. I have only read the very first one in the series and it was good.



## What We Were

(Continued from page 1) ♦

in Him), utterly estranged and outlawed from the rights of Israel as a nation, and strangers with no share in the sacred compacts of the (Messianic) promise (with no knowledge of or right in God's agreements, His covenants) And you had no hope (no promise); you were in the world without God."

If there were such a thing as a spiritual obituary, this one would declare that one is lost. If it were to be inscribed on stone as an epitaph it would be one, no one would choose. When the nation of Israel abandoned God, they were soon destroyed. When the church forsook God it suffered greatly. If we saints deny God in any way where He does not have the first place in our lives we will be the worse for it. When we lose sight of the redemptive word and work of God we will certainly cast off all restraint contained therein for our benefits. When Christ has little impact within, it will be greatly noticed without in a detrimental way. Abraham had great faith that God would raise up Isaac, but at other times His faith was not so strong. What we must be is strong in the Lord and the power of His might and that will draw us night to God.

♦ (Continued on page 17)





## 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).

### Christ is Not looking to Save "Cleaned Up" Sinners

I Timothy 1:15 says **"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."** Religion often makes the mistake of trying to clean up sinners before they seek Christ. Try to live good and moral. Try to keep the commandments of God and in doing so seek Christ. That is an improper understanding of why Christ came to mankind.

You see, the proper communication of the commands of God is this, you can not do it. You can not keep it. You can not be good enough. The law is likened to a mirror in the book of James. So the mirror of God's law has revealed to you that you are a mess. So now you are going to try to use the mirror to clean yourself? Like how does that work? Are you going to take the mirror off the wall and scrub your face with it? The law is a mirror, not a scrub brush. The mirror itself cannot remove the filth. It can only show the filth that is present.

**"For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was"** (James 1:23-24).

Consider the examples of those that come to Christ in the Bible. The leper in Matthew 8, did he put on a set of fresh rags before he sought Christ? Did he try to

conceal that he was a leper before he went to Jesus? No, he knew he was helpless to change his leprosy and went directly to Jesus.

**"And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean"** (Matt. 8:2).

If you attend a church that teaches the commandments of God to save you, you are being encouraged to seek salvation by works which is plainly forbidden by scripture. Or if in any way you are being given the impression that somehow the law of God plus Jesus will help you towards salvation, you are again trusting in works. The commandments of God are a communication of the Holiness of God and the wretchedness of man. You can not measure up to the Holiness of God. You fall short. The law is a schoolmaster to drive you to Jesus. Do not clean up and seek Christ. See your wretched, filthy, hopeless condition and seek Jesus alone to save you. He does not save cleaned up sinners. He alone washes them and makes them white as snow.

**"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith"** (Gal. 3:24).

**"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool"** (Isa. 1:18).



## Homeschool

(Continued from page 11) ♦

repeat mantras like, "We have to do better." But, ask yourself what will change? Nothing, you know it will not. It never does. And this is not coming from someone who is embittered against the public school system. I was not a victim, I was one of the fortunates that got out without too much emotional scarring. My children have been homeschooled from the start. Nothing happened to them that caused me to pull them out. But the system itself will not change and will not improve. Every generation has watched it slide further into depravity. Do you remember asking your parents what school was like? Do you remember how it was worse when you went through in the way of premarital sex, drugs, alcohol, bullying, school shootings? Can you imagine how much worse it is today?

I cannot imagine having to drop my kids off wondering if today was the day that they get hurt or worse. You do not have to do this. I hear about these things and I thank God every day that my kids are not in the system. They are "your" kids, not the school's. Not the state's. You do not have to risk them to the dangers of a sinful world just to educate them. You can train them up. Can a teacher care more for your child than you? Can a teacher educate your child better than you? Who cares more that your child succeeds? The teacher at a job that requires them to watch over 20-30 kids per class? Or you who loves your child and wants to educate just them? **"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"** (Prov. 22:6).



## What We Were

(Continued from page 16) ♦

James 4:8 says **"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."**

The Israelites in the relation to Jehovah God are a picture of the spiritual relationship of the born-again believer with Christ Jesus. We can see that we were chosen by God to be His peculiar people: **"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance"** (Psa. 33:12). **"In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel"** (Ex. 19:1-6). **"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you"** (John 14:23-26).

♦ (Continued on page 20)



## From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell  
(1941 - 2002)



# 100 Reasons for the Pre-Tribulation Rapture

The blessed hope of the return of Jesus Christ for His own has been the expectation of believers since the days of the New Testament churches. Christians have not always agreed on the manner, time, and purpose of His coming. Christendom has been debating pre-millennialism and a-millennialism since the third century. In the last hundred years there has arisen no small stir among pre-millennialists as to the finer points of their system of interpreting the prophecies of the Bible. There prevail four different schools of thought among pre-millennarians today.

### PARTIAL RAPTURE THEORY

This view is held by only a few pre-millennialists. It seems to have originated in the works of Robert Govett in the 1800's. These people contend that the saints will be raptured in groups during the tribulation period as they are prepared to go. They assert the frequent exhortations in the Bible to be faithful, to be ready, and to watch, all suggest that translation is a reward for faithfulness. These people are called "split-rapturists."

### MID-TRIBULATIONISM

Those who hold to mid-tribulationism are called "mid-tribers." These people believe that the church is translated at the middle of the seven years before the Great Tribulation takes place. This school of thinking is of modern origin with Norman B.

Harrison as its greatest defender. It has never been accepted by a large number of pre-millennialists and is losing ground each year.

### POST-TRIBULATIONISM

Those who contend for post-tribulationism are called "post-tribers." They believe the church will pass through the period of tribulation and be translated when the tribulation ends. In its broadest definition this is the common view of Christendom. It is held by a-millennialists and post-millennialists. Even Catholics and modern liberals take this position.

Post-tribers appeal at length to the writings of the church fathers to vindicate their position. This is because they have far more history to prove their contention than Scriptures. A second thing they do is to cast doubt on the great pre-trib texts. This is very evident in Ladd's *The Blessed Hope*.

Post-tribers also play down the Old Testament by what they call "the superior hermeneutics of the New Testament." It seems never to occur to them that the progressive revelation of the Old Testament is never contradictory to the New Testament. Post-tribers freely use the non-literal interpretation of prophecy when it suits their purpose. This is the same hermeneutics of a-millennialists and modern liberals.

There are really two basic groups within the post-trib camp. The "classic" post-tribers hold that

the entire age is the tribulation. These bear a greater resemblance to the church fathers, yet they generally reject the imminency of Christ's return, while the church fathers believed it. The "new-lite" post-tribers believe the tribulation will occur at the end of this present age. This group is of very modern origin, although they claim great antiquity.

Post-tribulationism in many ways harmonizes more with a-millennialism and post-millennialism than with pre-millennialism. This will be demonstrated in the following pages of this book.

### PRE-TRIBULATIONISM

Those who hold to pre-tribulationism are called "pre-tribers." This view maintains that no part of the church will enter the tribulation since it will be raptured before the tribulation begins. The majority of all pre-millennarians hold to a pre-trib rapture of the church, notwithstanding a resurgence of post-tribulationism at the present time. Pre-tribulationism is the only view, which can be reconciled successfully with a literal interpretation of prophecy.

Since the time of my spiritual birth, I have held to a pre-trib rapture of the saints. Although I have listened attentively to the other schools of thought, I remain more convinced than ever that the pre-trib rapture of the church and saints is the only tenable school of thought. I offer the following one hundred reasons for my view, not in the spirit of controversy, but in loving defense of my position.

I make no claim for originality for these arguments. Some have been long ago mentioned in various books. Others I have come to see through personal study and, to my knowledge, these have never appeared in any book. Since the

arguments for pre-tribulationism come from the Bible, I feel safe in saying that they are thousands of years old and originated with the Holy Spirit who inspired the Holy Bible.

### Some Post-Trib Men and Their Books

The first book of any importance on the Post-trib doctrine was written by Alexander Reese, a Presbyterian, in 1937. It bore the title *The Approaching Advent of Christ*. Reese attacks the pre-tribulationism of such leading scholars as Sir Robert Anderson, E. W. Bullinger, J. N. Darby, A. C. Gaebelein, William Kelly, D. M. Panton, and C. I. Scofield. Later post-trib books are indebted to Reese for much of their material and their basic arguments.

Sharrel E. Ford, presently the pastor of the Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, Sacramento, California, put out a book in 1954, in which he denies the two phases of the return of Christ. Ford's book abounds with numerous wild and weird prophetic ideas.

Ford is known as a "modern new-liter" on the west coast. He holds to a number of things contrary to the historic Baptist position. A good example of his revolutionary views is seen in a statement in his paper, *The Midnight Cry*. In the September 1, 1975, issue he makes this statement: "The covenants were confirmed 'in Christ,' in the body of Christ, in Abraham, in Israel. But many saved people are not 'in Christ,' not in His body, not in Abraham, not in Israel, not in the covenants."

George Eldon Ladd professes to be a Baptist. He is a strong post-trib writer and educator. Presently, he is professor of New Testament Exegesis and Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary

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# Country Preacher

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in Pasadena, California. In 1956, he published his book, *The Blessed Hope*.

On page 77 Ladd writes:

If a pre-tribulation rapture is a Biblical doctrine, it ought to be clearly set forth in the Scriptures which prophesy the Rapture of the church.<sup>1</sup>

Then on page 165 of his book he says:

With the exception of one passage, the author will grant that the Scripture nowhere explicitly states that the Church will go through the Great Tribulation.<sup>2</sup>

Does Ladd abide by his own rule?

In Ladd's book he lists A. J. Gordon as a post-triber on pages 46 and 47. While Gordon may not have agreed completely with pre-tribers of today, he must not be listed as a post-triber. A. J. Gordon wrote in 1891, in *The Watchword*: "The church is to be caught up to be with the Lord in the air before the Lawless One is enthroned, before the Great Tribulation."

Dave MacPherson is one of the most outspoken opponents of the pre-trib rapture living today. He is director of the non-denominational Heart of America Bible Society, Kansas City, Missouri. MacPherson has written a book, *The Unbelievable Pre-Trib Origin*. It was published in 1973. His book is well titled "unbelievable," because his attempt to make Miss Margaret MacDonald of Port Glasgow, Scotland, the founder of pre-tribulationism is not believable. Pre-tribulationism did not begin in 1830, but in the first century with Christ and His apostles.

On page 101 he contends that Margaret was the first person

in the world to split the second coming into two distinct parts. Dave is in error about this. The venerable Benjamin Keach (1649-1704), pastor of the Baptist Church, Horsleydown, London, taught a two-phase coming of Christ:

There is a precursory coming of our Lord, (as one notes) or a most glorious spiritual coming, to set up a more visible and universal kingdom in this world, which will precede his personal appearance . . . for I see no reason to doubt, but that the precursory coming of the Lord Jesus is to prepare things for his personal appearance; when, (as a bridegroom) he will appear to celebrate the marriage with his beloved spouse.<sup>3</sup>

On pages 105 to 108 he introduces a document written by Margaret MacDonald. This material does not contain any statement about a coming of Christ for the church before the Great Tribulation. It even sounds post-trib in places. Margaret wrote:

The trial of the Church is from Antichrist. It is by being filled with the Spirit that we shall be kept.<sup>4</sup>

Dave wrote a second book on *The Late Great Pre-Trib Rapture* in 1974. Like the first book, it abounds with lengthy denunciations of pre-tribers and very little positive information to prove his theory. He says pre-tribulationists are anti-Semitic, a false cult, and MacDonaldites. According to him, pre-tribers are guilty of the deaths of millions of Chinese Christians.

One of the most recent books on the post-trib is by Arthur Katterjohn. It is called *The Tribulation People*. Katterjohn is assistant professor at Wheaton College. He takes the position in his book that those of us living

today may very well be the tribulation people.

Herbert W. Armstrong, president and pastor of the Worldwide Church of God of Pasadena, California, began advocating that some in God's Church might go through the Great Tribulation in the mid 1950's. Armstrong is considered by most conservative Christians today as a false prophet. Books have been written exposing his heresy. Few post-trib Baptists seem to know that Armstrong is one of the best defenders of the new post-trib doctrine which they hold.

In a 1959, issue of *The Plain Truth*, the official magazine of the Worldwide Church of God, Herman L. Hoeh wrote an article entitled "The 'Secret Rapture' fact . . . or fiction?" The article denies any pre-trib coming and puts the church in the tribulation period. Such proof texts as Matthew 24:29 are used. Hoeh makes the woman in Revelation 12 the church. He makes the seventh trumpet in Revelation 11 the same trumpet as in I Thessalonians 4:16-17 and I Corinthians 15:52. He concludes by saying that there "is no secret rapture before the tribulation or at any other time!"

Informed people know that these arguments are the same arguments now being used by post-tribers to prove their theory. In all honesty, pre-tribers would be more justified in calling post-tribers "Armstrongites" than post-tribers are in calling pre-tribers "MacDonaldites."

I am aware of other post-trib books written by J. Barton Payne, Oswald Allis, Robert H. Gundry, Joe Ben, George H. Fronow, Norman S. MacPherson, George L. Rose, Harold J. Oekenga, Clarence Bass, Henry Frost, B. W. Newton, S. P. Tregelles, Norman

Douty, D. H. Kromminga, and Samuel H. Kellogg.

## The Believable Origin of Post-Tribulationism

From the middle of the nineteenth century to the present time, the majority of pre-millennialists were pretribulationist. In the 1940's and 1950's a number of religious leaders flooded Christendom with the post-trib doctrine, calling themselves "historic pre-millennialists." This is a reactionary movement against old-line Fundamentalism. The New Evangelicals took the lead in the rise of post-tribulationism. Slowly but surely, Baptists became infected with this neo-orthodoxy in the 1950's and 1960's.

Modern post-tribers boast that their system of teaching is of great antiquity, dating back hundreds of years before the time of Margaret MacDonald. They appeal to the writings of some of the church fathers and their belief that the pope was Antichrist. According to them, this fact proves the whole system of the post-trib.

But this hardly proves that the historic position of the church is post-tribulationism. There have been many different views as to who Antichrist is across the centuries. Some early believers thought Nero was the Man of Sin. Others during the Dark Ages looked upon the pope as the personal Antichrist. During World War II, a good many sincere believers thought Hitler was Antichrist. Some today believe Henry Kissinger is the Antichrist of Revelation, but they hold to a pre-trib rapture.

Post-trib Baptists who seek to prove post-tribulationism by the church fathers should be ashamed of themselves. Since when did Baptists go to any human authority to vindicate

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# What We Were

(Continued from page 17) ♦

15:16). Beloved, we are grafted in branches of the true vine, **"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman"** (John 15:1). We are to bear fruit indicative of the vine, **"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit"** (John 15:2). "Purging" makes us more fruitful. Purging has reference to "cleansing" not "pruning" and this is the work of the vinedresser or husbandman.

We are to worship the One true God. The Nations (Gentiles) were a many gods people (all false gods). Israel was instructed by God to be a one God nation. Today we have many gods: Universal church, gods of pleasure, self-will. We exchange the truth for a lie, **"Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen"** (Rom. 1:25). We are called to be a separated people. A people separated by God's commands with respect to our conversation (lifestyle) and separated from the godless world around us.

All these privileges Israel had as God's people as they obeyed His commandments, but they went from them. Israel as a nation disregarding God and His commands were in a manner of speaking "without God and without hope." They were aliens, as other nations, who were not privy to those covenants which were specifically for Israel and specifically for their benefit.

In their election we see ours. To being with they were non-existent till God made them a nation, **"In the third month,**

when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" (Ex. 19:1-6). **"For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth"** (Deut. 7:6-7).

Also we find that we were dead in sins, **"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even**

when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God (Eph. 2:1-8).

They were least of nations and had no merit: **"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become**

unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:1-20).

Beloved, we find them to be unworthy and unfaithful. We, too, by our fallen nature, are rebels; unworthy and unfaithful. Their every desire was only for the temporal blessings of the creation. When we were lost, we were carnal in our minds; worldly in our lust of the flesh, eyes and pride of life. **"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world"** (I John 2:16). But we (Gentiles) like them (Jews) are made nigh by the blood of Christ; **"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ"** (Eph. 2:13).

The Jewish people were to show forth to the world (nations) that they were the people of God. They were to be a bright light in a dark world. Simeon, as revealed to him the by the Holy Spirit, saw that in the Christ child, **"And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was**

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# What We Were

(Continued from page 20) ♡

just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:25-35).

As we enter the meat of my message I want to look at three points: What We Were, What We Are, and How We Came To Be What We Are.

## What We Were

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling

the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:1-12).

As we reflect on our lost state we find that we were vain-minded, "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Eph. 4:17-19). We

were empty-souled, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. 1:21-23).

We can also find from the text there in Ephesians four (above) that we were alienated from the life of God; from the life which God gives, the life which is in His Son "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (I John 5:11). The life made possible through the new birth as seen in John 3:3-8, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

I Timothy 4:2 says, "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" we were past feeling: without pain or apathetic. We were aliens from the commonwealth of

Israel: Ephesians 2:12 (above)—the word "commonwealth" comes from a word meaning "to descend". A state, a political body consisting of a certain portion of men united by compact or tacit agreement; under one form of government and system of laws. The commonwealth of Israel, as a nation in covenant relationship with Jehovah God. Commonwealth speaks of a citizenship condition. Israel as a nation was a country, a constitution, divinely appointed, with a divinely administered economy, rich in the bounty of God's blessings, as she remained a faithful wife to Jehovah God, her husband.

We were strangers from the covenants of promise: All through time and for all time and in His time God has given hope to His elect people through His word of promise in a covenant way. [Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Siniatic, Davidic, Messianic, Everlasting (Hebrews 13:20,21; Genesis 3:15) ]. And in them all Christ Jesus was the seed-substance and ground of that hope. What blessed words found often in Scripture "in Christ".

We resided in this world having no hope and without God in the world: All this in Ephesians 2:1-3,12 is the equivalent of a dead and dying world to which we belonged by natural descent. Ungodly in our thoughts, unrighteous in our life. Suppressing the truth (that God is), which is so evident by the world He created. Consider Romans 1:18-20, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath

♡ (Continued on page 22)

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

1-1-2022 to 1-31-2022

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Beginning Balance.....                      | \$5451.75 |
| <b>RECEIPTS:</b>                            |           |
| Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....            | 500.00    |
| S.G. B. C. Silsbee Tx.....                  | 30.00     |
| Carol Willett, Cottonwood Shores, TX ....   | 100.00    |
| Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL .....        | 25.00     |
| Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....               | 100.00    |
| Grace B. C., Gladwin, MI .....              | 50.00     |
| Grace B. C., Germanton, NC .....            | 50.00     |
| Grace Missionary B. C., Tulsa, OK .....     | 150.00    |
| The Lord's B. C., Goose Creek, SC .....     | 50.00     |
| Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY .....          | 35.00     |
| Mt. Pleasant B. C., Cheapeake, OH .....     | 100.00    |
| Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....       | 100.00    |
| Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR .....       | 50.00     |
| Sovereign Grace B. C., Wellington, KS ....  | 100.00    |
| Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....          | 25.00     |
| Beauty Mtn. B. C., Edmond WV .....          | 100.00    |
| Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....   | 300.00    |
| Southside BC, Fulton, MS .....              | 25.00     |
| N. T. B. C. Goshen, IN .....                | 50.00     |
| Parkway L. B. C., Springfield, OR .....     | 100.00    |
| Indore BC, Indore, WV .....                 | 300.00    |
| West Jefferson BC , West Jefferson, OH..... | 75.00     |
| JoAnn Mills, Barboursville KY .....         | 25.00     |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Postage for Philippine subscribers (yr) ... | 336.00     |
| Divided Checks.....                         | 300.00     |
| Subscriptions .....                         | 125.00     |
| Anonymous .....                             | 800.00     |
| Sub Total .....                             | \$4001.00  |
| TOTAL .....                                 | \$9452.75  |
| <b>EXPENDITURES:</b>                        |            |
| Postage .....                               | 662.43     |
| Printing.....                               | 459.10     |
| Supplies .....                              | 32.09      |
| Wages .....                                 | 1750.00    |
| FICA .....                                  | 118.58     |
| Div Cks .....                               | 300.00     |
| Total Expenditures .....                    | \$3322.20  |
| ENDING BALANCE .....                        | \$6,130.55 |



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

1-1-2022 to 1-31-2022

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Beginning Balance.....                    | \$3,955.10 |
| <b>RECEIPTS:</b>                          |            |
| Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....          | 225.00     |
| Calvary Ind. B. C., Sumas, WA .....       | 100.00     |
| Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY ..... | 200.00     |
| Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....             | 100.00     |
| .....                                     | 625.00     |
| TOTAL.....                                | 4580.10    |
| <b>EXPENDITURES:</b>                      |            |
| Radio time.....                           | 465.97     |
| Recorder parts .....                      | 32.04      |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....                  | 498.01     |
| .....                                     |            |
| Interest .....                            | +0.03      |
| ENDING BALANCE .....                      | \$4,082.12 |

# What We Were

(Continued from page 21) ◊

shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” and John 1:3, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

There is no hope because they are without God and under His condemning sentence as stated in by our Savior in John 3:18-21, “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”

Men while lost and unbelieving have gods, but not the One true God. It is an imagination. If men have not Christ, they have not God as Father; “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works” (John 14:10). Our text shows that being without Christ is synonymous with being without God and so under the wrath and judgment of God. No firm foundation to build your life on. No anchor to hold to in the

storms of life. Tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine and grasping for the next dream that comes down the pike.

We were “without God” is to say that one is far off from every provision of God, every promise given. It is a sad life indeed to find no dependence on the true God. Though one such as this may experience many good times of prosperity that tend to deceive them and draw them off from the truth that without God there is not only no hope in this world but more terrible to face no hope in the eternal world of which there is only hope of eternal death.

## What We Are

Let us turn in our Bibles to the first two chapters of the letter from Paul to the Ephesians and consider a quick list of what we are now that we have salvation:

1. Saints: Ephesians 1:1
2. Faithful: Ephesians 1:1, 15
3. Blessed: Ephesians 1:3
4. Chosen: Ephesians 1:4
5. Predestinated: Ephesians 1:5,11
6. Adopted: Ephesians 1:5
7. Redeemed through His Blood: Ephesians 1:7
8. Heirs: Ephesians 1:11; 2:5,6
9. Quickened (made alive): We who were dead to any intimate relationship with God (Ephesians 2:1,5)
10. Saved by Grace: Ephesians 2:8
1. Not of works—Ephesians 2:9

All of this was encapsulated in the gospel seed for our New birth: “There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be

with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world;

◊ (Continued on page 23)



# What We Were

(Continued from page 22) ♦

but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:1-19).

How We Came To Be What We Now Are

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13). What are the meanings of these words? That God sent His sinless Son into this sin cursed world to die for sinners. God forsook His Son that He might forgive sinners "My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death" (Psa. 22:15). And John 19:34, "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."

His life was not taken. He willingly gave it. He laid it down and took it up again, John 10:17-18 "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

The innocent blood that takes away sin was shed, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the

sin of the world" (John 1:29) that our sins may be forgiven, "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). That blood intercedes for His chosen saints today in Heaven; "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:10-12). What can wash away your sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Our hope is His coming again as we read in I Thessalonians 4:13-18 "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Maranatha. Amen!



# Country Preacher

(Continued from page 19) ♦

their religious views? Human histories are not inspired of God. Baptists take the Bible as the sole rule of faith and practice, not some uninspired church father. Any view of eschatology which depends more on church history than the Bible incriminates itself.

Arthur Katterjohn, a post-triber, writes:

The correctness of the pre-tribulation rapture must be weighed from Scripture, not history.<sup>1</sup>

Our post-trib friends ignore the many statements in the writings of the church fathers on an imminent coming of Christ. Our opponents are utterly at a loss to explain this, or to reconcile it with their denial of an any moment coming of Christ. There is as much proof that the early churches were pre-tribulational, as there is that they were post-tribulational. It is hard to prove anything concretely except pre-millennialism from the second century until the Reformation.

It would seem that my post-trib Baptist friends have a greater historical problem than do we pre-tribers. It is in an area much nearer to our own time. Who is the first Baptist theologian who taught the new brand of post-trib doctrine in the 1900's? How many can they name before 1930? Before 1950?

It is utterly vain to appeal to some Baptists who were post-millennialists or a-millennialists to prove the new brand of post-trib doctrine. Where were the pre-millennial Baptists who held to the modern brand of the post-trib in 1907? Post-tribers need some clear cut statements from leading Baptists in these days.

If post-tribers call upon me to

produce some pre-tribers who were Baptists, I will be happy to do so. Can they produce men of equal standing in our ranks who were post-tribers?

**Editor's note:** This content came from Elder Milburn Cockrell's book, "One Hundred Reasons for the Pre-Trib Rapture." We will be printing our fourth edition of this book later this year. Should you be interested in a copy please let us know at 662-282-7794. Thank you and God bless!

♦ (Continued in the next issue)

## From the Editor

Thank you, beloved, for reading our paper! In our last issue, we published an article on "What Do Dreams Mean?" and this particular article upset some of our readers. I apologize for that, and I would like to take a moment to just clarify that this article was not one of doctrine. It was simply one man's thoughts and musings on his experience with dreams. It surely does not represent that of every writer of this paper and, as he stated in the article, it is not one in which he could be dogmatic. As the editor, I will labor to make that clear in the future should we publish other articles that are mere musings rather than doctrinally specific facts.

With that being said, I would like to thank those who loved us enough to call and write with their concerns for this content. You have not hurt our feelings in the slightest and we count you to be our most precious friends! It is good to see that there are so many who still passionately care for this paper and the work of Berea Baptist Church.

## Addendum

Greetings Beloved Readers of the Berea Baptist Banner!

♦ (Continued on page 24)

# Addendum

(Continued from page 23) ♦

Congratulations go out this month to Bro. Marty Foor and Eld. Doug Newell for their love and concern for the Banner and their subscribers. (Maybe the Editor can arrange a life-time subscription for them? No? Well, I tried!) It was brought to my attention that last month's article "What Does My Dream Mean?" might have been ambiguous about two important doctrines, that I would like to clarify.

1) Certainly anyone that knows me, knows that I believe in the sufficiency of Scripture and that the Canon of Revealed Knowledge was closed when the ink dried off of John the Beloved's pen, there on the Island of Patmos. But not everyone knows me, so I just wanted to take a moment to clarify that any study on "what dreams mean" will have that, as a solid doctrinal back-drop. There are no longer any people gifted with the "Apostolic Gifts" of dreams or dream interpretations. Any blessings or leadership of the Holy Spirit in our conscious or subconscious will not deviate from the revealed will of God! Absolutely!

2) The other clarification I wanted to make, was the purpose

of directing folk to their pastor for help in understanding their dreams. I do not believe that men of God today have any special "Gift" for interpreting dreams, but I do believe that Pastors everywhere should have a special "Gift" for ministering to their congregation. How wonderful to have spiritual leaders that "know us" and we feel comfortable talking to about events in our lives. "Apt to Teach" and "Vigilant" are qualifications for pastors, and although some of us may have godly parents or sage friends that have wisdom for us in our times of uncertainty, I would hope we "all" have a good pastor that will direct our hearts and understanding toward the Word of God.

I hope that everyone enjoyed reading the article, and we all realize that God is still awesome! I remember back when Mike Pence (good ol' days?) was Vice-President, that some liberal whackos (you know who you are!) tried to make a big deal out of him "talking to God"... The backlash when real Christians stood up and said that they, too, "talked to God" every day in their prayers, caused those whackos to back down very quickly! I trust that the Lord's people today do have a vibrant prayer life, with a burning desire to know the Lord's will for

them all day long. And God does not quit being our God when we lay our heads on our pillows. Put away the carnal distractions of this world, and fill our hearts with godly sermons and Bible studies, and I trust the peace of God and His faith will permeate our dreams and we will wake up, still rejoicing in His goodness and grace! Selah! Think about it!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

We have been blessed here at West Jefferson Baptist Church, in that besides myself, we have two other ordained ministers. They are both available to preach for anyone that may need them to! Brother Ray Sexton (304) 207-6521 and Brother Chuck West (734) 709-8366! They are eager and willing to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Grace Baptist Church of Gladwin Michigan is seeking to start a mission work in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. We are also seeking a sound preacher to go there. If you are interested and feel led of the Lord please contact Pastor Sam Wilson at 989-701-5564. You may also contact Brother Tom Coffee, who is currently working in the area at 843-254-3018.

This ministry currently has a blog written by Bro Coffee that can be read online at <https://thefaithfulofgod.com/blog/>

The Maranatha Missionary Baptist Church located at 14460 Ravenna Avenue, Alliance, OH, 44601, is seeking a pastor. The church was organized in 1981 and currently has seven members that are grounded in sound Baptist doctrine. Any interested elder can contact Brother Denny Morgan at [dennymatco@gmail.com](mailto:dennymatco@gmail.com) or call (330) 324-3038.

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 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](mailto: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.

Should you have church announcements to share with the community please feel free to email them to us at [request@bereabaptistchurch.org](mailto:request@bereabaptistchurch.org) or you can call us here at 662-282-7794. Thank you and God bless!



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