

The Heritage of the Servants of the Lord

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD" (Isa. 54:17).

This is an encouraging passage of Scripture for us to consider today. In the book of Isaiah we read about a time when doom and peril were prophesied for Judah and Israel – and yet we read also about the hope and the promises that are delivered to those that would fear the Lord



God and serve Him. I know that this prophecy was delivered to the children of Israel, but I believe that it would be entirely appropriate for us to take this passage and apply it to ourselves – even in the New Testament age.

I like this 54th chapter of Isaiah. It sometimes seems hidden away between the (possibly) more famous 53rd and 55th chapters of Isaiah. But, when we read these chapters in context, we find out that the Saviour that is prophesied of in the 53rd chapter, and the salvation that is presented

in the 55th chapter, are meant to be read and consumed and enjoyed by those that have been bereaved, saddened, and persecuted in this world – as shown to us in the 54th chapter.

As you can see in our text chapter, the Lord does bind Himself to His people, and, despite all of the opposition of the world and Satan himself, the Lord does promise and predict ultimate success for those that will trust in Him. If you refer back to what our text verse tells us, it seems quite plain to me, that the Lord will help and support those who are **"the servants of the LORD,"** and that no **"weapon"** or opposition of men or of angels will **"prosper"** forever against

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The Glory of His Grace

By James Stuart

"To the praise of the glory of his grace" (Eph. 1:6).

It is an accepted commonplace of our theology and ethics that all men should live to the glory of God; this is indeed the first and great law of life, which, alike in the interests of Divine government and of human well-being, must be observed by all rational creatures. God created us in His own image and after His own likeness, that we should do His will. As we were made for God, we should find our chief good in Him.

In this supreme end of our life there has been deplorable and universal failure. Self has been enthroned in the place of God. Sin has established its power, and drawn men astray into the paths of iniquity and death. Hence the need of Divine intervention of a restoration and renewal. The redemption which is in Christ, and which from first to last is of grace, is God's answer to men's deepest and most urgent need. Hence also our election and adoption; the fruits of our acceptance in the **"Beloved."**

The fact of Divine intervention does not, however, alter the fundamental law of life, as we have already stated it. That law is necessary and eternal. God must always and under all conditions be supreme, and His glory be our aim. The only difference created by redemption is

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The Kingdom of the Son of Man

By Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 – 2002)

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13-14).

This may very well be the most glorious part of the visions of Daniel. Here is a plain and full announcement



of the general theme of the prophets from the beginning--the kingdom of God on earth. The establishment of this Divine kingdom was one of the great objects of the incarnation of the Second Person in the Godhead. While Daniel spoke in another part of his prophecy of **"the sufferings of Christ"** (9:26), here he speaks of **"the glory that should follow"** (I Pet. 1:11).

THE CORONATION OF THE KING

This scene before us is to take place

in Heaven near the end of the seven-year tribulation period (Rev. 11:15; 15:3-4). The Ancient of days is God the Father, the Source of all power, and all who reign derive their power from Him (Dan. 4:32; John 19:11). In the before-time covenant the Father said to the Son: **"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession"** (Ps. 2:8). We know from other Scriptures that the Son did ask this kingdom of His Father, and that the Father heard and answered His prayer (John 11:42). While on earth Christ said: **"And I appoint unto**

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Spend more time cleaning your own windows and less time complaining about other's.

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye" (Matthew 7:3).

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Kingdom of the Son

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you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me" (Luke 22:29). In the vision of Daniel 7 we see the Father answering the prayer of Christ for this kingdom.

The Son of man in my text is none other than Jesus Christ. The Ancient of Days is God the Father. There are no symbols here as were the four beasts earlier in Daniel chapter 7. Here the description assumes a literal form. We see the installation of the Son of man into His kingdom in the presence of assembled angels who attend Him. The nobleman (Christ Himself) in the Parable of the Pounds went into the far country (Heaven) to receive for himself a kingdom and then to return (Luke 19:12). Here we see Christ in Heaven receiving the kingdom from His Father. This coronation of Christ in Heaven is previous and preparatory to His descent to earth.

Daniel 7:13 is the only time in the Old Testament that Christ is given the title of "**Son of man**" (unless it be also in Psalm 80:17). In the gospels this was Christ's favorite term by which He designated Himself some 84 times. The disciples did not call Him such; He called Himself such. This is a peculiar, distinctive, predetermined name given the Messiah in virtue of His covenanted relationship to the kingdom. The Davidic Covenant designated a coming seed of David to whom the kingdom would rightfully belong (II Sam. 7:12-13; Acts 2:30). Christ was that seed. Christ linked this title with His coming to set up His kingdom: "**When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. . . Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world**" (Matt. 25:31,34; cf. 16:27-28; 19:28; 26:64; Luke 9:26).

The kingdom is always promised to the humanity of Christ, for as the eternal Son of God He is "**King for ever and ever**" (Ps. 10:16). Seeing the kingdom is promised to Him as

the Son of man, there are two things this proves. First, His kingdom will be a visible, outward kingdom as much as the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome (Dan. 7:1-8). Christ shall overturn all earthly kingdoms (Dan. 2:44). Second, the very phrase "**Son of man**" implies and necessitates His coming and reign. In I Timothy 6:14-15 Paul wrote about "**the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.**"

Christ will return in a human form to rule as a human king, but not without the perfections of His divinity. The words "**came with the clouds of heaven**" (Deut. 4:11) suggest the divinity of Christ (Ps. 97:1-2; 104:13). He went away with clouds (Acts 1:9); He will come again with clouds (Matt. 24:30; Mark 13:26; Rev. 1:7). He declared before Pilate: "**Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven**" (Matt. 26:64). Christ went up to Heaven to receive the kingdom; He will come again to set up the kingdom He receives from His Father. This kingdom is to be set up at His second coming. II Timothy 4:1 mentions "**the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.**"

THE REALITY OF IT

There is something given Christ by the Father, something Christ did not have before. Mark the words: "**There was given him.**" This love gift from His Father is called "**dominion, and glory, and a kingdom.**" As a result of this gift "**all rulers shall serve and obey him**" (Dan. 7:27 margin). This gift of a kingdom is as truly a kingdom as of those that preceded it. The kingdom of Christ is as real as the kingdom God gave Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:37). It is represented as properly a fifth universal monarchy, to follow the fourth kingdom of Rome (Dan. 2:40; 7:19-27). As a kingdom, it has, like the rest, its Ruler, its subjects, its laws, and its administration.

The difference between the kingdom of Christ and those that precede it is in its origin, its character, its objects, its blessings, and its

duration. The kingdom of Christ is the rule of Heaven come down to earth.

Christ is given three things by His Father, and they are all the features of absolute rule. "**Dominion**" is the rule and authority exercised by a king over a kingdom. "**Glory**" is that appropriate to one who is the head of a kingdom. Christ had to ascend to Heaven and get the kingdom before He can come in all His glory (Matt. 25:31). A "**kingdom**" is the territory that a king reigns over.

As seen in the text and in other Scriptures (Luke 22:29; Ps. 2:6-8; Luke 19:11-15), Christ is to receive the kingdom from His Father. This explains why He refused the offer of the Devil when he promised to give Him "**all the kingdoms of the world**" (Luke 4:5-7). Christ is to receive the kingdom from His Father, not Satan.

This fact throws light on John 6:15: "**When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.**" These Jews had owned Him with their lips as a prophet, and they were ready to crown Him as their King. There were two reasons why Christ did not accept their offer. First, He could not be their King until He had first officiated as a Priest, offering Himself as a Sacrifice for sins. Second, He was not to receive the kingdom at their hands. The beasts may take their kingdoms from the winds, striving upon the great sea (Dan. 7:1-8). Evil world rulers may seize their kingdom by violent means. Christ must be given His kingdom by the Father.

Some make much of the words of Christ in John 18:36: "**My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.**" Note Christ did not say: "My kingdom is not in this world." Rather He said: "**My kingdom is not of this world,**" meaning the Satanic world system. His kingdom is to be given to Him by God the Father, and it is the Kingdom of Heaven.

THE KING OF IT

In my text the King is distinctly

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Let's Study Baptism

By Nathaniel Hille
of Caldwell, Kansas

PART 3

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:5).

In our second lesson we discussed whom the Bible says should be baptized. Our next lesson will address the question: "What is the purpose of baptism?"—OR—"Why do we baptize?" There are varying opinions as to what the purpose of baptism is. Some declare that baptism 'washes away sins' or 'secures salvation.' However, we must search the Scriptures to see what God's Word says is the purpose of baptism with respect to salvation.

1) Salvation is by grace through faith according to the Scriptures: **"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"** (Eph. 2:8-9). **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"** (John 3:16). From these two verses (and many others not listed) the Bible declares that salvation is by grace (God's unmerited favor and mercy); that this grace is received by faith (believing, relying, trusting upon Jesus to save).

2) Salvation before baptism: The Bible declares that salvation by grace through faith is a prerequisite to baptism. John the Baptist forbid to baptize those who came to him except they brought **"forth therefore fruits meet for repentance"** (Matt. 3:8). When the Ethiopian eunuch asked what hindered him from being baptized, Philip replied, **"If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest"** (Acts 8:37).

In the case of the household of Cornelius, Simon Peter was preaching and the **"Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word"** (Acts 10:44). Simon Peter proposed the question, **"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we"** (Acts



10:47). Peter then commanded those who had received the Holy Spirit to be baptized (Acts 10:48).

The Great Commission unto the Lord's Church (Matt. 28:18-20) is listed in its proper order: first, we are to make disciples; second, the disciples are to be baptized; third, we are to teach them all things that Christ has commanded. The Great Commission declares that **"before"** one is baptized, they are to be a follower of Christ.

When the jailor asked Paul and Silas, **"what must I do to be saved?"** They replied, **"Believe on (trust, rely upon) the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house"** (Acts 16:30-31). Paul nor Silas mentioned baptism to him.

3) Salvation without baptism: Luke 23:39-43—The repentant thief. Jesus stated to the repentant thief **"Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise"** (Luke 23:43). Christ did not tell the thief that he must be baptized in order to be in paradise with Him. We have no record of the thief being brought down and baptized. Why? Because baptism has NO saving power or ability. Furthermore, what of all the Old Testament saints? Are we to believe that they are in eternal torments because they were not baptized? Certainly not! Paul speaks of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Samuel, and many others who BY FAITH were saved (Heb. 11:1-40). If baptism is needed to be saved, then everyone before John the Baptist is lost!

4) What then is the purpose of baptism?: If baptism does not save, what then is the purpose of it? Baptism is a picture of what has ALREADY taken place in the believer. In I Peter 3:21, baptism is called **"the like figure."** Baptism, with respect to salvation, is nothing more than a figure, an image, a picture of what has taken place. Pictures

cannot save, but the real substance can! If you wanted a glass of milk, would you go to a picture of a cow to quench your thirst? Certainly not! Baptism is merely a picture, a figure of what grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ has done.

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). This is what baptism pictures: that the believer is dead with Christ and has risen with Him unto a new life that will walk according to the will of God.

Concluding thoughts: If the purpose of baptism is to save, then the man who lives closest to the water is closest to God. If the purpose of baptism is to save, then Christ died in vain, because His blood was not needed if baptism can wash away sins. If baptism saves, then John the Baptist is lost because he was never baptized. If baptism saves, then all the Old Testament saints are lost because they were never baptized. If baptism saves, then God is a liar and a murderer because He sent His only begotten Son to die on a cross needlessly. We beseech each one to make an honest search of the Scriptures concerning this matter. The question is NOT "have you been baptized?" The question is "are you trusting, relying upon Jesus to save you?" Maran: atha. AMEN.



Kingdom of the Son

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said to be the Son of man by Daniel. Christ has this title in virtue of His incarnation, making Him truly man while He is as truly God. He is the Son of God and the Son of man in one person. Christ was born a king (Matt. 2:2), lived as a king (John 1:49), died as a king (Matt. 27:37; Luke 23:42), and is coming again as King of kings (Rev. 19:16).

As the Son of man Christ is the Head and Representative of humanity. He is the Second Adam, taking the place of the first Adam, the father of our race who plunged

us into ruin. The sovereignty over creation given to Adam (Gen. 1:26) was lost in a great degree (Heb. 2:6-8) in the fall, but it will be restored when Christ is given **"dominion, and glory, and a kingdom."** Soon the kingdoms of this world will be under the rule of the Son of man, the King of righteousness and Prince of peace. This sin-blasted and sin-blighted world has been longing for the rule of Christ for nearly 6,000 years.

THE TIME OF THE KINGDOM

According to the Prophet Daniel, the time of the Messiah's kingdom is after the destruction of the fourth beast, or the Roman Empire with its 10 kingdoms and little horn (Dan. 7:23-27). In Revelation 19:11 we see Christ coming from Heaven as **"KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS"** (v. 16) to **"judge and make war"** (v. 11). His war is against Antichrist and the ten kings of the revived Roman Empire: **"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings. . ." (Rev. 17:12-14). Following this "battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:14), the seventh angel will sound his trumpet and **"the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever"** (Rev. 11:15).**

During the present age is the gospel dispensation, the time of preparation for the coming kingdom of the Son of man. Christ is marking out those who overcome in the good fight of faith. These shall sit with Him on His throne and receive from Him authority to rule over the nations. **"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne"** (Rev. 3:21). **"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels**

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of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Rev. 2:26-27).

THE PLACE OF IT

It would seem from Daniel chapter 7 that the place of Christ's kingdom is the earth, the place of the preceding monarchies. The kingdom is said to be not "in" Heaven, but "under the whole heaven" (v. 27). It is peoples, languages, nations, and rulers who are to serve and obey Christ (vv. 14,27). These only have their place and existence on earth. The expectation of the saints in Heaven is to reign with Christ on earth (Rev. 5:10; 20:4). It is "the kingdoms of this world" (Rev. 11:15) that are to become the kingdom of Christ. The Father promised Him "the uttermost parts of the earth" (Ps. 2:8) for His possession.

In Daniel chapter 2 the stone kingdom is said to "fill the whole earth" (Dan. 2:35). Then verse 44 says the kingdom of Christ "shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms." This must be a kingdom in this world, if it destroys earthly kingdoms and takes their place.

Christ is also said to "have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:8; Zech. 9:10). Zechariah 14 tells of a time when the Lord comes with all the saints (v. 5) and then it is said: "The LORD shall be king over all the earth" (v. 9). This kingdom is "the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory" (Matt. 19:28) and when the earth shall be delivered "from the bondage of corruption" (Rom. 8:21).

THE ADMINISTRATION OF IT

When Christ comes, having received the kingdom (Luke 19:15 from His Father, the time will come "that the saints" shall possess the kingdom (Dan. 7:22,27). These glorified saints are associated with Christ and shall administer the kingdom under Christ. "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment" (Isa. 32:1). "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto

you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:28-30). "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (I Cor. 6:2). ". . .and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. . . .Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4,6).

THE CHARACTER OF IT

First, the character of the kingdom is seen from the fact that Christ is the King and the saints of the Most High are associated with Him in the administration of it. They are called "the saints of the Most High" (Dan. 7:22) because this title of God as the "Most High" indicates He is the "possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14:18-19). Christ is the King of righteousness and the King of peace. Those who reign with Him are "saints" or "holy persons." They are holy as He is holy. Once they were sinners, but by the power of sovereign grace they have been transformed into the image of the King. In this kingdom love reigns instead of selfishness and hate, righteousness instead of wrong and injustice, truth instead of falsehood and deceit, humility instead of pride and vain glory, purity instead of licentiousness and lust. Such a kingdom is paradise restored.

Second, all people, nations, and languages shall serve and obey Christ (Dan. 7:14,27; Ps. 72:8; Phil. 2:9-11). The Lord's house will no longer be a den of thieves. With a few exceptions, the profession of religion will no more be disassociated from its possession. "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 14:20-21). Superstition and formality will be gone. Social life will have been entirely changed and purified. Christian government will not be in name only as it now is, but

in reality. Nations shall live in peace and loving brotherhood. Weapons of war will be turned into implements of agriculture (Isa. 2:1-4). Military academies will be closed down and the art of war forgotten.

The greatest revival in the history of the world is to occur in the kingdom of Christ. He shall rule in the fulness of the Spirit (Isa. 11:2-3), and He will pour out the Spirit on all flesh (Isa. 32:13-15; 44:3; 59:19,21; Ezek. 11:19-20; 37:14; 39:29; Joel 2:28-29; Zech. 12:10). Then "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14). Pentecost, with its grand results of 3,000 conversions, was but the firstfruits of the blessings of the kingdom (Acts 2; Rom. 8:23; Jas. 1:18). All things which offend shall be gathered out of Christ's righteous kingdom (Matt. 13:41), and Satan is to be bound that he can deceive the nations no more (Rev. 20:1-3).

THE EXTENT OF IT

The greatest of human monarchies were limited, but Christ's kingdom will be world-wide. All peoples, nations, and languages shall serve Him (Dan. 7:14; Ps. 72:11). Men everywhere are to be blessed in Christ, and all nations are to call Him blessed (Ps. 72:18). The "whole earth shall be filled with his glory" (Ps. 72:19). What a day this will be!

There will be an almost converted world. True religion is to be universally professed, although not universally experienced. Unregenerate men and women will be the exception, not the general rule. "The sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed" (Isa. 65:20). Worship and service will be rendered to Christ externally (Ps. 18:44-45), though not in all cases sincerely. A forced subjection will be rendered where there is not a willing one (Zech. 14:16-19). Converted Israel is to be the principal human instrumentality used by God to convert the unevangelized (Isa. 66:19).

THE DURATION OF IT

We know from Revelation 20:4-9 that in its first phase the kingdom of Christ shall last for one thousand years. ". . .and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4). ". . .and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6). At

the end of this thousand years Satan is released from the bottomless pit and his final revolt takes place: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, God and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (Rev. 20:7-8). This outbreak of evil is to be speedily terminated by fire from Heaven: "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (Rev. 20:9).

After the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth with His saints the kingdom becomes an indestructible and a perpetual kingdom. Daniel said: "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:14). This kingdom cannot be removed like other monarchies. It is a Divine kingdom, and the Divine is eternal (Ps. 145:13). It is a righteous kingdom with no seeds of corruption in it. It is founded upon eternal principles, not the maxiums of temporary expediency like the present kingdoms of the world. The blessings of Christ's kingdom are always of value.

The kingdom which the Father is to give to Christ will be a literal kingdom like the four preceding kingdoms were (Dan. 7:1-8), but unlike them it will be everlasting. At the end of the thousand years Christ is to share this kingdom with His Father (I Cor. 15:24-28). Then God, Christ, and the saints "shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 22:5).

THE CERTAINTY OF IT

There is nothing more certain to come to pass as the establishment of Christ's kingdom of righteousness on earth. This topic was one of the major themes of all the Old Testament prophets. It was the subject of Christ and His inspired apostles. It is the keynote of the Book of Revelation. The predictions in Daniel chapter 7 of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome were exactly fulfilled. Those concerning the fifth kingdom

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will not be less so. We may have in our minds some uncertainties as to the conditions in the kingdom, but there is no uncertainty as to its establishment on earth. It is one of the certainties of the word of Him Who cannot lie.

CONCLUSION

1. Believers have great cause to rejoice at the prospect of this endless kingdom of peace and righteousness (Ps. 96:11-13; 97:1; 98:4-9). It will bring glory to God on earth and peace and goodwill among men. Christ's righteous kingdom will end the crime, tears, and blood with which sin has stained and burdened the earth for nearly 6,000 years. We can rejoice that Satan, our old enemy, will no longer be able to make the world a wilderness. Our Redeemer-King will make all things new and bring utopia to planet earth. Amidst sin and scepticism, we can rejoice for a better day is coming for our world!

2. It is our duty to speed the kingdom by our prayers. The King Himself taught us to pray: **"Thy kingdom come"** (Matt. 6:10). The **"Lord shall build up Zion"** and **"appear in his glory"** because **"He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer"** (Ps. 102:15-17). The last words of the Bible read: **"Even so, come, Lord Jesus"** (Rev. 22:20). According to holy Scripture, the kingdom is set up in answer to the prayer of Christ (Ps. 2:8; Dan. 7:13-14), the prayers of the saints (Matt. 6:10; Rev. 8:4), and the prayers of the tribulation martyrs (Rev. 6:9-10). Brethren, let us pray much and hasten the day of God (II Pet. 3:12).

3. It is our privilege to prepare others for the coming kingdom. Peter urged the Jews to repent and be converted in order that the times of refreshing might come, and God might send Christ again (Acts 3:19-20 RV). The bride must be gathered out and prepared for His coming so she can say: **"Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him"** (Matt. 25:6).

4. Are you ready for the kingdom of Christ? Are you among the subjects of His kingdom of grace now so you can be sure of your place

in the kingdom of glory? Is Christ your Savior and King from sin? Are you His loyal and loving subject? Have you given yourself entirely up to Christ to be saved and ruled? Are you born again? If not, you cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3).



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those that are the children of the Lord. Now, I know that the wicked enemy may **"prosper"** for some time in this life; and, I know that the sinners may **"prosper"** in their attacks against the righteous in this life; but, they can never ultimately succeed against us. In fact, this entire 54th chapter of Isaiah gives us (the children of God) a sense and a promise of ultimate success in our endeavors. Though afflictions may abound, still we will succeed! Though the world may turn against us (and against the ways of God), still, we will succeed! Though Hell itself should be pitted against us, still, **"the heritage of the servants of the LORD"** is that we will succeed! Why must this be true? Because every one of those true **"servants of the LORD"** have obtained **"their righteousness"** from Jesus Christ. And, who can impugn the righteousness of God? And, who can ultimately conquer or defeat the Person and Work of God?

Now, for the rest of our time today, I want us to consider in more detail, some of the aspects of **"The Heritage of the Servants of the Lord."**

CALLED AND OWNED OF GOD

Let me say at the beginning of this point, that I believe that the word **"heritage"** as it is found in our text verse, has at least some relation to the word **"inheritance."** So, I see this passage as one that ties the servants of the Lord intimately to the Lord God, with the result being that we are His children, and even heirs of His promises and blessing. Is not this wonderful to consider? I mean, how could we ever be defeated, or conquered by our foes, when God has placed His name upon us, and given unto us a place in His family?

In essence, the 54th chapter of Isaiah is letting us know that there is a people on the face of the earth who are **"called and owned of God."** Some might say that this is a rather bold (or arrogant) claim to make. However, I believe that our text is just one of many passages that bears this claim out, and proves that God has a people that are His on the earth. This elect people (I believe) exists in every generation. Though the number may be few, and their powers may be small, still this people will always exist. This people cannot be lost or utterly defeated by the world. This people can always count on the blessings of the God Who has purchased them and called them out of the world, and put His name upon them – just as a man in this life will give his name to his wife and his children. **"For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God"** (Isa. 54:5-6). God is not only our **"Maker,"** but He has also bound Himself to us as the **"husband"** of His people. Not only has He formed us, but He is also known as our **"Redeemer."** Now, I know that these promises are given to literal Israel in the Old Testament. And I know that Jehovah God is proclaimed as the **"Husband"** and Israel

as His wife in the Old Testament. But are not these promises something that we can count on in the New Testament? Has not the Lord Jesus Christ bound Himself to His servants in His churches – even as a man would bind himself to his wife? (See Eph. 5:22-33).

Whatever else one might claim concerning the relationship that exists between God and His people, we must admit that the Scriptures do clearly ally God with His people. And, even more than this, God is bound to His people in an intimate way which is different than His relationship with lost mankind. In other words, those that are God's people will be called out and owned by God; or, as those that believe in the Doctrines of Grace might say: elected, called, and redeemed! This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.

I suppose that one of the great passages of Scripture that can be read in support of such comforting thoughts is found in the 8th chapter of Romans. You can read the entire chapter and take great heart in the calling and redemption of God. But, let me refer you to a some particular verses in this chapter: **"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"** (Rom. 8:16-18). The Spirit of God bears witness in this earth (and in the hearts of the saved) that there is a people of God, and there are children of God on this earth. Therefore, if God has taken ownership and a position of paternal influence in the lives of those that are His, how can we ever doubt our heritage in the Lord? (See Rom. 8:28-39).

Though Assyria may carry some away captive; though evil kings and armies may be knocking at the gate; though the world may oppose itself to the men and women of God; though our Nation may depart God and Biblical principles; though the minions of Satan may control our government and our society; still, in

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the end, God will save those that are His. Not all the powers of Hell can snatch even one child of God from the grip and safety that are found in the hands of God and the bosom of Jesus Christ! (See John 10:27-30; John 6:37; Heb. 7:25).

SEPARATED, BUT NOT FORSAKEN

In addition to be “called and owned of God,” the servants of the Lord count on the fact that though times might be difficult here; and though our distance from God might seem great; still, we can always take comfort in the fact that we are “separated, but not forsaken.” **“For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee”** (Isa. 54:7-10).

In fact, I think that we can look at this thought in a couple of ways. First of all, though we are in a sense **“as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit”** – especially when we consider how the world will treat those that are the servants of the Lord; still, we must always harbor in our hearts the knowledge that God has not forsaken us, nor will He ever utterly forsake us! We read in Deuteronomy 31:6, **“Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”** (See also Heb. 13:5; Ps. 37:25). No matter what the world of men may do against us; and no matter if God will allow them to have success against us for a little space; in the end, we know that God is always with us, and His

will shall be accomplished.

Second, I think that we should consider these verses from the perspective that even though it appears that God Himself has forsaken us and has left us to our own devices for a while; still, in the end, He will return unto us. In the lands of Israel and Judah, the Lord allowed the enemies to gain the upper hand for a while. He even allowed the children of Israel to be carried away captive by the Assyrians and the Egyptians and the Babylonians. But, this would not be the case forever! The land must be judged for its evil ways and for its wicked rulers and society. But, the servants of the Lord had a heritage of the Lord, which was that they could not be utterly forsaken. **“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast”** (Isa. 26:20).

I suppose that we could (and should) also make application to America today: yes, the times are evil. And, yes, it does appear that God has forsaken this land, after that this land has forsaken Him. But, even here there are some that will serve the Lord and call upon His name in truth and righteousness. And, for those few I say, “God will not forsake you forever! But, **“with great mercies will”** He **“gather thee.”** **“In a little wrath”** He **“hid”** His **“face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will”** He **“have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.”** Yes, our country is worthy of judgment and the wrath of God. But, this judgment and this wrath are not meant to be ours forever. Rather, God will judge us and our nation, and then He will have mercy on those that are His. This is our heritage, and the heritage of all those that serve the Lord.

A PLEASANT FUTURE

Finally, I want to think about the future and the heavenly inheritance of those that are the servants of the Lord. **“O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of**

pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee” (Isa. 54:11-14). This particular passage begins with an address to those that are **“afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted.”** I believe this to be a reference to those that are the servants of the Lord in a desperate and evil place. Surely this was the condition of the servants of the Lord in the land of Israel and Judah in the time of Isaiah the prophet! What obstacles were raised against the godly men and women! What afflictions were imposed upon those that sought the Lord! What total lack of comfort was found in the world around the servants of the Lord!

And yet, the Lord promises that He will reward and bless the servants of the Lord. He at least promises a time to come in which there will be **“peace,”** and the servants of the Lord (and their children) will be **“established...In righteousness,”** and they would **“be far from oppression.”** He even promises a time when they **“shalt not fear”** and when they would be far **from terror.** I wonder, when has such a time existed? Are the faithful servants of God in the time of Isaiah still waiting for such a time? Or, have their children after the flesh ever experienced such a time?

Well, I do not know about you, but I believe that one day the Lord will return into the hearts and the minds of Israel, and they will worship Him and serve Him in truth and in spirit. (See Zech. 12:10). One of the verses that we have just read exclaims, **“And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children”** (Isa. 54:13). I believe that the chosen few of Israel will be turned to God again, and then they shall fear Him, be **“taught of”** Him, and worship Him. I also believe that it is fair for us to make claim of these same promises and comforts as we seek to serve the Lord, and as we consider the future of the children of God.

The Lord makes a similar prom-

ise to Israel through the prophet Jeremiah: **“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more”** (Jer. 31:31-34). Unlike some that inhabit Christianity, I take these verses literally. I believe that one day the literal people of Israel will turn to the Lord. I know that not all will believe, but many shall. I do not believe that this is only a figurative promise, and that Christianity has replaced Israel in these promises of the Lord. But, I believe that we are coming upon the time of the Day of the Lord. And, in that day the Lord will work wonders and miracles in the lives of the Jews, and many will turn to Him. They will look upon Jesus – the Christ that they rejected and slew – and they will believe in Him as their Saviour. Though the world will hate and oppose the Jews; though the very minions and the powers of Satan will be arrayed against the people of Israel; still, many will believe and trust in Jesus Christ.

And yet, the promise remains that after they have believed, there will be peace and safety. When will this time be? I believe that this will take place during the millennial reign. And, in the course of blessing His people, the Lord will also bless those that are His from amongst every nation, tribe, kindred, and tongue. Though times and the world is evil; though sin is

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all about us; though men may presently defy the Lord God that made them; though once great nations are brought low into the degradation of sin; still, there is something (and Someone) to look forward to.

So, in this context, we can all take pleasure and take heart in the wonderful words of our text: **“O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.”** Though times may be bitter and sinful now, the time is coming in which there will be **“fair colours”** and **“sapphires”** and fine jewels; and all our **“borders”** shall be **“of pleasant stones.”**

*Pensive, doubting, fearful heart,
Hear what Christ the Saviour says;
Every word should joy impart,
Change thy mourning into praise.
Yes, he speaks, and speaks to thee,
May he help thee to believe;
Then thou presently wilt see
Thou hast little cause to grieve:*

*Fear thou not, nor be ashamed;
All thy sorrows soon shall end,
I, who heaven and earth have framed,
Am thy Husband and thy Friend;
I, the High and Holy One,
Israel's God, by all adored,
As thy Saviour will be known,
Thy Redeemer and thy Lord.*

*For a moment I withdrew,
And thy heart was filled with pain;
But my mercies I'll renew;
Thou shalt soon rejoice again;
Though I seem to hide my face,
Very soon my wrath shall cease;
'Tis but for a moment's space,
Ending in eternal peace.*

*Though afflicted, tempest-tossed,
Comfortless awhile thou art,
Do not think thou canst be lost,
Thou art graven on my heart;
All thy wastes I will repair;
Thou shalt be rebuilt anew;
And in thee it shall appear
What the God of love can do.”*

John Newton



- A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS -

By Timothy J. Hille
of Ashland, Illinois

Chapter Twenty-Seven – Holy Vows

The final chapter of this book of the Bible seems to serve as an appendix, the things previously delivered being that which was required, and the things now delivered being such as were voluntary. The laws and instructions given in the preceding chapters governed things which were obligatory, while the laws and instructions given here governed things which a person might do freely and spontaneously out of a desire to honor, please, thank, and praise JEHOVAH. Every aspect of true worship and service to God is governed by the Scriptures, including that which we do voluntarily. A child of God may do what he or she will when it is in accordance with the will of God (Rom. 12:1-2).

Chapter Outline

- i. Concerning special vows and things dedicated to God: vs. 1-25
 - a. Of persons: vs. 1-8
 - b. Of animals: vs. 9-13
 - c. Of houses and lands: vs. 14-25
- ii. Concerning things already claimed by God: vs. 26-33
 - a. The firstborn: vs. 26,27
 - b. Devoted (or accursed) things: vs. 28,29
 - c. The tithe: vs. 30-33
- iii. Closing summary: vs. 34

I. VERSES ONE THROUGH EIGHT.

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying . . .” These verses now before us are not something added by man, or something trivial. These words are the words of God. The principles found here are not less important than those found elsewhere in God's Word. **“By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live”** (Deut. 8:3). We live in an age when Scripture is being trivialized by men who have no heart for serving God in sincerity and in truth – “thy word is truth,” (John 17:17). All worship and service is governed by the Word of God, and must be rendered in humble submission to His Word in order to be accepted with Him (Matt. 7:21; Luke 6:46).

God instructs Moses now that he should **“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them”** these precepts which would govern their vows unto the Lord. **“When a man shall make a singular [special] vow . . .”** The language can be literally rendered, **“When a man shall separate a vow . . .”** (refer to Numbers 6:2, where the same word is used). These were vows made unto the Lord separating either the person or something within the person's power to God. “Old Testament vows were promises to God to give up to Him something of value on condition of deliverance in distress or help in attaining something desired.”¹ (Gen. 28:20-22; Judges 11:30-34; Ps. 66:13-14). These were not things required by the law, but regulated by the law. There is in the service of God that which is free from the heart and full of thanks and cheer, wherein a believer desires in some special way to give of himself or herself unto God and His work. Yet, there is to be a sober-mindedness in all things, and reverence for the holiness of God (Eccl. 5:4-7).

In particular, we first note vows regarding individuals being dedicated to God: **“the persons shall be for the LORD by thy estimation.”** In that a person vowed to give himself, herself, or someone over whom he or she exercised authority, such as a servant or child, to God, there was a value placed upon the vow in terms of money for which the person might be redeemed from the vow, which was assumed to be the normal case. Various rules are here laid down to govern the **“estimation”**, or valuing, of those who by a vow were dedicated unto the Lord. The estimated redemption value for a person who was promised to God for some particular service was based upon the age and gender of the person, which had respect to their abilities and usefulness due to their physical energy and strength. In the service which we render unto the Lord, there is a spiritual character, such that **“if**



there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not” (II Cor. 8:12).

The vows being here referred to respected the dedicating or promising of a person to the service of God. This was done with the purpose of redeeming the person again with money, which money would go into the treasury of the sanctuary to supply the needs and maintenance which were incurred (II Kings 12:4-5). We find some occasions where a person was vowed unto the Lord in actuality and not redeemed (I Sam. 1:9-11, 19-20, 24-28; 2:11; Judges 11:35-40). We find mentioned here in these laws of estimation all ages. Whether male or female, young or old, rich or poor, every child of God has value and a place in the service of the Lord. Your service to God is valued by the Lord, and all which we do for Him should be done heartily and in humility. We may at different times in our lives render different kinds of service to our Lord and King; only let our service be according to His will and with all our heart and ability (Ps. 92:12-14; 116:12-19; Eccl. 9:10).

II. VERSES NINE THROUGH THIRTEEN.

In these verses the rules are prescribed which governed the dedicating of domesticated beasts unto the Lord, whether for sacrifice, or for some other use for the benefit of the sanctuary and the priests. **“And if it be a beast, whereof men bring an offering unto the LORD . . .”** If the animal was a clean beast of the kind which were brought for offerings and sacrifices, then it was to be counted **“holy”**, and used for sacred purposes. This kind might not be redeemed, or purchased again, once given; nor was the beast that was vowed to be exchanged, or else both the beast vowed and the one which was brought for an exchange became the Lord's. A person was not to use the excuse that the one vowed was not good enough, or was too good, for sacrifice. As concerning unclean beasts, which might not be used upon the altar, these were given a value for which they might be sold, the proceeds going into the treasury of the

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sanctuary; or they could be redeemed by the donor for an amount one fifth more than the estimated value. These regulations teach us that vows ought to be regarded with soberness and be made in sincerity. We ought not to regret that which we give to the Lord. The Lord abhors any going back. "There is a temptation to make liberal vows on condition of receiving certain blessings from God, and then to forget them when the blessing is received Let us, then, enter upon our vows calmly, deliberately, without any unseemly haste."²

III. VERSES FOURTEEN THROUGH TWENTY-FOUR.

We have next the dedication or vowing of houses and lands. **"And when a man shall sanctify his house to be holy unto the LORD, then the priest shall estimate it, whether it be good or bad: as the priest shall estimate it, so shall it stand."** The priest would determine the value of the house, and the proceeds from the sale thereof would go into the treasury of the sanctuary. If the person who dedicated the house to the Lord desired to buy it back, then he must pay one fifth more than the value determined by the priest (Acts 4:34-35). This was voluntary and done for the honor and glory of God.

In the case of fields being dedicated to the Lord, there is a difference made between land that belonged to a person by inheritance, and land which a person had purchased but was not his by inheritance. The rule of the former is first described. The land which belonged to a man by inheritance, or which was **"of his possession,"** was valued at a price based on the amount of seed required to sow the field: **"then thy estimation shall be according to the seed thereof: an homer of barley seed shall be valued at fifty shekels of silver."** The instructions also describe how the valuation of the land should account for the nearness or distance of the year of jubilee. If the dedication of the land took effect immediately after a year of jubilee, then the field was valued at the full estimation of the priest according to God's guidelines. Otherwise, the

valuation was decreased based on the number of harvest years which had passed since the previous jubilee. The redemption price was then set at this estimated value plus one fifth more of that value. In the event that the land was not redeemed, or the one who made the vow sold the land prior to the next jubilee, then the land did not return to him at the jubilee, as was the usual case: but instead the land became the property of the priest. In such a case it is said, **"But the field, when it goeth out in the jubilee, shall be holy unto the LORD, as a field devoted; the possession thereof shall be the priest's."**

In the case of a field which a man had purchased, which was not of his inheritance in the promised land, that field might be dedicated to the Lord. In the day in which that field was dedicated, the person making the special vow unto the Lord had to pay the redemption price. The valuation was determined by the priest based upon the nearness or distance of the year of jubilee. In this case, as with the former, the value was modified in relation to the year of jubilee, in which year every man returned to his inheritance. The lesson for us is thus: "The values of all earthly things are influenced by their relation to things heavenly."³ The things which we have here below ought to be valued as to their usefulness in the work of the Lord, and their benefit or hindrance to us in seeking first the kingdom of God. In the case of a purchased field, the field returned to the original family ownership in the year of jubilee, in accordance with the law of that year.

The lesson we may glean from these things is that we may devote ourselves, our possessions, our homes, our property, and our wealth more fully to the Lord. If someone gives more to the Lord than you, you ought not to begrudge him or her. That person has the right to reserve a special part of his or her life from mere temporal things and give it unto the Lord freely, as do you. Whatsoever we give to God is holy. Our talents, abilities, time, and energy can be dedicated to the Lord. That which we do for God ought to be done out of thankfulness and love, in humility and reverence, and with a desire to please and honor

Him (I Cor. 10:30).

IV. VERSE TWENTY-FIVE.

"And all thy estimations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs shall be the shekel." God had given various rules for valuing the vows which the people made unto Him in the preceding verses. Here He establishes the value of the monetary standard which was to be used. God does not leave anything in true service and worship up to human reasoning. We ought not to use the value-systems of the world in the service and worship of the Lord. God teaches us how to value holy and heavenly things (Mark 12:41-44; II Cor. 9:7; Heb. 11:24-26).

V. VERSES TWENTY-SIX THROUGH THIRTY-THREE.

These verses describe certain things which a man might not vow because they were already claimed by God and holy unto Him. First described is **"the firstling of the beasts, which should be the LORD's firstling"** (See Ex. 13:2, 11-15). Those animals not qualified for sacrifice could be redeemed according to the value estimated by the priest plus an additional fifth of the value; and if not redeemed, they could be sold, the proceeds devoted to the sanctuary of the Lord. We should see here that the things which are first belong to God – **"seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness"** (Matt. 6:33); and so those things He claims, and it is mockery for a man to vow to give God that which is already His by divine and redemptive right.

The second class of which men might not make vows or redeem for themselves was **"devoted"** things. This word is elsewhere rendered **"accursed,"** and carries the meaning of an irredeemable grant to God, and something banned from normal use (Josh. 6:16-19; 7:1, 10-13). No one could make a personal claim to anything which was **"devoted"** except he or she incurred the penalty of the devotion (ban, prohibition). **"Every devoted thing is most holy unto the LORD. None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death."**

The third instance of things concerning which vows might not be made was **"all the tithe of the land."**

The law of the tithe was thus: **"all the tithe . . . is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD."** The tithe consisted both of the fruit of the field and the increase of livestock. The tithe of the harvest could be redeemed by paying the equivalent value and adding **"thereto the fifth part thereof."** **"Concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock,"** the animals would pass one by one under the rod of the owner, and each tenth animal would be touched and marked as being for the Lord. The owner was not to seek to change one animal for another, or else both would be holy to the Lord, and could not be redeemed (Mal. 3:8-10; Prov. 3:9-10). Men need to realize that the tithe is God's, He claims it, and if they withhold it they are robbing God.

We must realize and recognize that God claims us for His own, and that we are bound to obey Him in that which He commands (I Cor. 6:19-20). After a person has been saved, being baptized, being a faithful, participating member in one of the Lord's New Testament churches, tithing, and seeking to live for the Lord are not things which we can do if we will, but which God commands us to do. The selling of property and devoting of the proceeds to the Lord's work, the dedicating of one's time to serve the church, and such like things are acts of spontaneous and cheerful service which may be rendered as God leads and moves upon the hearts of individuals. All service and worship is governed by the Scriptures.

VI. VERSE THIRTY-FOUR.

"These are the commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel in mount Sinai." These commandments formed the system of worship and national conduct which God ordained to secure the children of Israel in holiness, and thus in fellowship with God. God has given us commandments, for His glory and our good; He has given them to us through His appointed means; and He has given them to us as His chosen and redeemed people, by His own special revelation. **"If ye love me, keep my commandments"** (John 14:15). **"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you"**

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(John 15:14), (I John 5:3). To say that we love God and then to ignore, neglect, or otherwise disobey His commandments is to show ourselves as false and possibly hypocritical.

NOTES

1. Meyrick, F. *The Pulpit Commentary*.
2. Edgar, R. M. *The Pulpit Commentary*.
3. MacDonald, J. A. *The Pulpit Commentary*.



The Glory of His

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that we are required to keep specially in view the glory of His grace. We must so live to make manifest that glory in ourselves and our doings. We who are accepted in Christ are to glorify the redeeming God, to show that the economy of mercy under which we are placed is not less but more favorable to uprightness, consistency, and zeal than the most rigid legalism; that it results in a purer, stronger, and more gracious manhood; and that our pardon has bound us more tenderly and firmly to God. The pardoned rebel is a rebel no more, but a servant and a friend. The grace of God is His free, unmerited love, His compassion, His mercy to sinners. It is a principle of helpfulness which goes beyond our deserts, treating us with royal clemency and favor. Grace is the distinctive note of the Gospel, its specific feature. It brings into play the highest attributes of God, even so it meets the deepest needs of man. Holiness is the glory of God--the very luster of the Divine nature. There cannot, therefore, be in the Gospel anything contrary to it, anything that dims its splendor or compromises its character. God has chosen us in Christ that we should be holy and without blame; we are called to be saints.

Many men abuse the grace of God, and turn it into a means of sin. They are indifferent to the claims of duty, to the law as a rule of life, and think that they may sin that grace may abound. Not so we; we must revere and honor the law, to which, be it remembered, grace itself has rendered its profoundest homage in the Cross of Christ. Christ suffered

for sin and felt the keenness of its sting. Sin is God's great enemy and ours; the death of Christ which atoned for it, and which was a pre-requisite to our forgiveness, lays us under profounder obligations; we who have been thus pardoned should do more and better, because of the high vantage-ground on which we have been placed. Surely the Cross, as the instrument of Christ's suffering and the symbol of reconciliation, appeals to all that is highest in our nature. It shows us the awful evil of sin; its antagonism to God; its hurtfulness to man; its repugnance to Christ, Who saved us. The Cross appeals also to our gratitude as the recipients of unmerited mercy, to our sense of honor as having been saved by Him, Who might have condemned us. A chivalrous disciple will strive to be in spirit and aim even as his Master; more than ever are we bound to live according to the will and purpose of Him to Whom we owe all, absolutely all that we have. In order that the glory of God's grace may be manifest in our lives, let us observe---

(i.) *The sin which grace forgives must be resolutely abandoned.* That which needs so awful an atonement cannot be a light evil; it can never be other than hateful to God. The Cross on which Christ suffered for sin condemns it. No man is pardoned simply that he may escape punishment, or be allowed henceforth his own way. A holier will than ours has to be recognized and honored (II Cor. 14:15). To escape sin itself as the essence of evil is our purpose. We can only live to the praise of the glory of God's grace when we forsake the sin which opposes and dishonors Him.

(ii.) *The obedience which grace exacts must be cheerfully rendered.* Grace, as doing homage to law, becomes itself a law. It creates in us a new and keener conscience, with a wider sweep of observation and greater dynamic force. Christ commands holiness; He is our Leader and Lord; His words are finger-posts in the path of duty. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Can we disappoint Him to Whom our debt is so profound, and can we praise the glory of His grace if we do not follow its promptings?

(iii.) *The generosity which grace displays and realizes for us we must*

cordially imitate. The Cross which reveals so great a love is more than the charter of our freedom; it is also the pattern of our lives. As Christ was in all the essential elements, in the ruling spirit of His nature, so are we to be. He Who is our Teacher and our King is also our Exemplar. He embodies in Himself all that we need to be or can be, and the Christian can have no higher aim than to be conformed to His death. Hence we are to be forgiving, self-sacrificing, and helpful to others, showing, as He did, the charm of a Divine condescension, and winning men to God by the tenderness and persistency of an invincible love. The Spirit of our Master is to enter our hearts and rule our lives. In the presence of the Cross with its mighty Sacrifice, as well as in the wilderness of temptation and on the mount of beatitude; in the endurance of suffering with Him and for Him, as well as by the lake side and in the homes of sorrow; among personal enemies and enemies of God, we

are to realize the sublime privilege of filling up that which is behind in the sufferings of Christ for His body's sake, which is the Church, knowing that we have been sent into the world by Christ, even as He was sent by the Father. "The glory of his grace." Ah, yes, we must show how full, how rich, how varied are the contents of the grace we have received; how adequate and complete its power. The wounds which sin inflicts grace heals, the beauty which sin mars grace renews, the power which sin destroys grace restores, the hopes which sin blights grace inspires with immortal energy, the death which sin brings in its train grace completely conquers, and better, infinitely better, is it to be saved by the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven, than to inherit only what would have come to us from the first Adam. The grace of God proceeds from the very heart of His glory, and to that glory it inevitably leads!

(The Baptist Magazine, July 1893)



NO MIDDLE GROUND-ONLY A CHASM

"The Faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints."

1. The Bible IS the Word of God.
"The Book judges man."
2. Jesus Christ is THE Son of God in a sense which no other is.
3. The birth of Jesus was SUPERNATURAL.
4. The death of Jesus was EXPIATORY.
5. Man is the product of special CREATION.
6. Man is a SINNER fallen from original righteousness, and apart from God's redeeming grace is hopelessly lost.
7. Man is justified by FAITH in the atoning blood of Christ; result - supernatural regeneration from ABOVE.

Modernist Theology

1. The Bible CONTAINS the Word of God.
"Man judges the book."
2. Jesus Christ is A Son of God in the sense which all men are.
3. The birth of Jesus was NATURAL.
4. The death of Jesus was EXEMPLARY.
5. Man is the product of EVOLUTION.
6. Man is the unfortunate VICTIM of environment but through self-culture can "make good."
7. Man is justified by WORKS in following Christ's example; result - natural development from WITHIN.

courtesy Moody Bible Institute Monthly

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. What does Matthew 24:22 mean when it says, “**except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved?**” Does this mean that unless God intervenes (“**but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened**”), that the tribulation period would destroy all human life?

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The peoples who are alive during this time period will be saved from destruction because the elect of God are alive and on the earth. I would consider that if the tribulation went on longer than 7 years, as the sins of this world certainly deserves, all flesh would be eventually destroyed.

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Matthew 24:21-22 reveals: “**For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.**”

This prophetic portion of Scripture will be fulfilled immediately after the abomination of desolation (24:15) during the last three and a half years of the Seven Year Tribulation period. This three and a half years is called the Great Tribulation because it will be the very worst years in all of human history. The False Prophet and the Antichrist will be at full strength in an unprecedented reign of demonic terror, wickedness, hatred, persecution, cruelty, and death. There has never been, nor will there ever be a more destructive and disastrous period in earth’s history.

Though it is speculation on our part, it seems possible that all flesh could be destroyed during the Great Tribulation, were it not for God’s purpose regarding His elect.

The one bright spot in the passage is the revelation that God will still have an elect people, whom He chose before the world began, who will be saved during this awful time. Praise God that all the forces of hell and wickedness cannot thwart the saving purpose of Almighty God (Dan. 4:35; Isa. 46:9-11)! The shortening of those days seems to indicate that God will supernaturally cause the sun to set earlier so that His people will have more time under the veil of darkness to flee the wrath of Antichrist and his minions. The context (24:15-20) provides specific instructions for those who are fleeing the persecution of the Antichrist.

It is also interesting to note that during the last half of the tribulation the Book of Revelation describes at least 3 separate judgments upon the earth that are associated with some alteration of the heavenly bodies that give light (Rev. 6:12-14; 8:12; 16:10).

John MacArthur made some interesting comments on this passage: “At least three times during the Great Tribulation the heavenly bodies that give light to the earth will be radically altered in ways that will progressively reduce the daylight until the Antichrist’s forces are compelled to operate in total darkness. God will use that darkness for the sake of the elect, using it to hide them from their would be destroyers...And when God chooses people for Himself, He will restructure the entire universe if that becomes necessary to protect them and to fulfill His promises concerning them.” (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew Vol. 4, p. 45).

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First let us point out this verse says “**no flesh**” “not human life” would be destroyed. This reminds us of the story of Saul’s disobedience to God when Samuel told Saul that the Lord of host had said Saul was to smite Amalek, and to slay everything they had:

“**Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass**” (I Sam. 15:2-3).

God was angry with Saul for not carrying out His commandment, when God says kill them all, that is what He means, and He means what He says. The bleeding heart liberal would say, “My God is not a God of wrath but a God of love,” if you believe that, then you have been deceived.

The Lord had said, “**all flesh**”, not just human life. The reader might ask does it make a difference. Well, we believe it does, because if it is all human life that would be destroyed then this would include the elect at this time as well as the non-elect. But of course we know that is not going to happen, because God has His remnant:

“**And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth**” (Rev. 14:1, 3).

But to answer the question we would answer “yes” if God doesn’t intervene (“**but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened**”)

that the tribulation period would destroy all “**flesh**.” In Revelation we are told that one fourth of the earth’s population will die. This is a most terrible time for the inhabitants of the earth including the elect before the end of the first three and half years of the seven year tribulation.

This is why Jesus’ second coming is so important, it is strictly for the elect’s sake and to set up His earthly reign, chain Satan, and rule for a thousand years, and we might add, wipe out all the wicked, the non-elect. In Brother Ross’s book, “*Elementary Eschatology*” (page 168, The Inhabitants of the Millennium), he states, “At the very beginning of the thousand-year reign of Christ only those who are born of the Spirit and washed in the blood of the Lamb will be privileged to enter into the kingdom of righteousness. We could say more, but we want to just answer the question at hand and not go any further on who all the elect are.” We highly recommend Brother Tom Ross’s book.

Here is a picture that we have held in our mind for as long as we have been saved and studied the Lord’s second coming; imagine if you will, that the borders of Israel are surrounded by her enemies (the antichrist and his armies) and just about the time the button is pushed, just at the point of Israel’s annihilation, Jesus comes back and steps on the Mount of Olives with His heavenly army, “**And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south**” (Zech. 14:4). He will defeat the antichrist and all his followers at the battle of Armageddon and then reign for a thousand years.

Matthew 24 has always been a chapter of confusion, mainly because many fail to read that the Lord’s disciples asked three distinct questions in verse 3, which Jesus in turns answers all three questions. Allow us to recommend another very good book to the reader, “*An Exposition of Matthew 24*” by the late Milburn

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What can you tell me about the book spoken of in Exodus 32:32-33, and what is meant by the word "blot?"

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The word blot means to wipe away, or exterminate. **"And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life"** (Phil. 4:3) The Elect of God are written in this book of life. This book contains no new names for these names were written before the foundation of time. **"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"** (Rev. 13:8).

The verses in question are a historical account of God informing Moses that those who have sinned against Him, their names were not in the Book of Life. God has by His predestination chosen His elect before the foundation of the world. The non elect are those not written in the Book of Life, they have never been part of this book and never will be. **"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire"** (Rev. 20:15).

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Let us first answer the question! The word blot can mean; to erase, abolish, put out, or utterly wipe away.

Now that we have given what should be a sufficient answer, allow

us to briefly elaborate on this chapter. First, before we begin, there seems to be a difference of opinion here whether Moses wanted to be killed (blotted out) or erased and utterly wiped away out of the Book of Life, but we will not labor that point here but in fact give reason why Moses would want to have this done, which ever would be the correct meaning of the book here.

This by far is one of my most favorite chapters in the Bible. To appreciate what is going on here, which I have always found interesting, allow me to briefly break this chapter down. Moses is on Mount Sinai receiving God's commandments for forty days and forty nights (sound familiar) (Exodus 24:18) and the people saw that something had delayed him or maybe he was dead, needless to say they were getting bored and getting antsy (v. 1). So Aaron made them a molten calf and they worshiped it and said it was the god that brought them out of Egypt (vv. 2-9).

Meanwhile God was finished giving Moses the first set of commandments and said unto Moses, **"Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation"** (Ex. 32:10). Now this is where it gets very interesting, look at Moses's reply, **"And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have**

spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever" (Ex. 32:11-13). And in verse 14, God answers Moses's request. Now this is where I find it most human and shows again man's depravity being to this point many times in my ministry. Allow me to paraphrase here, Moses goes down and sees this rebellion in the camp and he is so angry (now remember he had just talked to God about Him being angry with His people) that he smashed the first set of tablets and made them eat the powder of the golden calf and had the children of Levi kill three thousand Hebrews with the sword (vv. 15-28), that is why, **"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord"** (Rom. 12:19).

Now back to what the questioner has asked and why did Moses, ask to be blotted out of the Book of Life or wanted to die (vv. 31-32). Let the reader understand what Moses is asking is something that is impossible, that is why the Lord answered him in this way, **"And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book"** (Ex. 32:33). God is telling Moses, it will not be you who will die or be taken out of the Book of Life but who have sinned against Me. If you have not picked up on it yet, Moses had such (once he calmed down) compassion and love for his people that he was willing to trade places with them if it were possible, which again was impossible. We see the same thing with Paul in Romans 9: **"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen"** (Rom. 9:1-5).

Do you see dear reader what Paul

says there in verse 3? **"For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:"** Again Paul knows he could never trade places with his kinsmen. Read the words of John Gill concerning Moses, and I believe it applies for Paul as well; "Moses asks for this, not as a thing either desirable or possible, but to express his great affection for this people, and his great concern for the glory of God; and rather than either should suffer, he chose, if it was possible, to be deprived of that eternal happiness he hoped for, and should enjoy."

I know that is probably more than the questioner bargained for, but again it is one of my favorite Scriptures. But I am not quite done, because what Moses and Paul wanted to do and could not do was done by God through His Son Jesus Christ, not only did He love and have compassion for us but He left His first estate and came down here to die for all those who are His, praise His Holy Name!

Though we get angry sometimes as preachers and church members at each other, let us, too, have the same affection for God's people as Moses and Paul. God Bless!

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Moses is most likely making reference here to the Book of Life, in which all the names of the elect of God are written. The fact of this book's existence is acknowledged by God when He calls it **"..My book"** in verse 33. It is further delineated in Revelation 13:8, **"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."**

There are other books of God and we perhaps could take a moment to mention them. First is the revelation of God to men (God's Word, the

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Forum #1

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Cockrell. In my opinion he was one of the greatest Bible believers of our time (depending on your definition of the Bible). He was one of the most well-read individuals I have ever met, and if you do not believe me run on down to Mantachie, Mississippi to The Berea Baptist Church Bookstore and ask to see their library, it is an eye opener. It is one of the greatest libraries that I have ever seen of one individual and he read the greater part of it before the Lord took him home. God Bless!

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The 24th chapter of Matthew is an AWESOME outline of the end times given by Christ to his disciples in response to their question in Matthew 24:3, **"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"** (Makes one wish the disciples had asked a WHOLE lot more questions to have the answers recorded for us!) Selah! Think about it!

The first segment of our Lord's answer (vs. 4-14) contains the last days or end times in which we currently live. Verse 13 prophecies of the "snatching away" of the Rapture, where "saved" has the relevant thought of being rescued from imminent danger. That imminent danger is the Great Tribulation which begins shortly (from 30-75 days) after the Rapture and encompasses our text verse in the passage of verses 15-28. This is also called the "Time of Jacob's Trouble" in Jeremiah 30:7, which more properly refers to the last three and one-half years of the seven year Great Tribulation or Daniel's Seventieth Week (Daniel 9:24-27). The eschatological outline is finished up with the Second Advent at

Armageddon in verses 29-31.

Christ synopsisizes in two verses, what He will later expand to the bulk of the book of Revelation, taking 14 chapters (Rev. 6-19) to devote exclusively on this time of GREAT Tribulation, **"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened"** (Matt. 24:21-22). Selah! Think about it!

Some confusion has arisen around this word **"shortened."** Some have stumbled at the teaching of an omnipotent, omniscient, immutable God, and somehow think that God at times in His eternal existence has come to various points where it seems like things are getting out of His control, and He must hasten to change the circumstances lest His mighty will be foiled... How FOOLISH! Perish the thoughts! The true God of the Bible says, **"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it"** (Isa. 46:9-11).

To answer the question- YES! If God had not **"shortened"** or **"curtailed"** the time of Great Tribulation and limited the days thereof to seven years from before the foundation of the world, then ALL flesh would have perished. But in an echo of the previous worldwide judgment (of water), **"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD"** (Gen. 6:8). God's ELECT have ALWAYS found GRACE in the eyes of the LORD!!! In Noah's generation, in our generation and in the generations to come, up until even this Time of Jacob's Trouble! God's people will NOT be destroyed by the righteous Judge of the nations. **"And Abraham drew near, and said,**

Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right" (Gen. 18:23-25)? Indeed, He SHALL! He has promised to deliver His people, and THAT, He has determined to do! Even that back-slidden, sorry excuse of a Christian called Lot, was a recipient of that marvelous grace of Jesus Christ! Listen to the words of the angels sent to destroy Sodom: **"And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. ...Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither"** (Gen. 19:16, 22).

Many of the elect will be martyred, but ALL of the ungodly lost folk's flesh will perish during the seven years, culminating at Armageddon. **"And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. ...Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"** (Matt. 25:32-33, 41). Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



Forum #2

(Continued from page 91) ♦

Bible). This is the most pertinent of all books to us, as it reveals the gospel of Jesus Christ and is used by the Holy Spirit to convict mankind of their sins, unto judgment or salvation. **"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is**

in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:15-17).

The second are the account books, as it were of our lives, chronicling our actions that God will hold us accountable unto... **"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned"** (Matt. 12:36-37). **"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works"** (Rev. 20:12).

Special care is taken by the Holy Spirit to distinguish between all other books and this Book of Life. This precious book is the manifestation of the covenant of redemption between the Godhead, unto each other- that those elected of God the Father are KNOWN to both Him, God the Son and also the Holy Spirit! **"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. ...While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost."** (John 17:6, 12).

So if these names have been written and known of God for all eternity, what is Moses referring to when he asks the LORD to **"blot"** out his own name, and then God uses the same word **"blot"** to seemingly banish these sinner's names from this Holy Book? The word **"blot"** has the simple thought of "erasing," but it really has much more than that in the context here. To erase or blot something out, is to make an empty or clean spot or space (in the book). Moses is making the ultimate plea of an intercessor by asking that his name be blotted or erased and that the sins of his people

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Forum #2

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might be imputed to HIS account and thereby cleanse, purify and validate the people's account toward God. In FACT, this is indeed what Christ was divinely able to do- to make the propitiation (payment in full) of the people's sins and thereby SATISFY the sin-debt that otherwise would have caused God to blot out the names of every man, woman, boy and girl ever born to Adam and Eve... Christ did what Moses was unable to do, except in picture. Selah! Think about it!

But will there be blotted spots in the Book of Life for those that reject Christ? I do not know, for sure, but I do know that Noah could have accommodated a few more folk in the ark if any of those witnessed unto had repented and believed. Beloved reader, the gospel call is GENUINE! The doctrine of predestination is merely a doctrine of salvation! Folks are never predestined to Hell, but only to Heaven! God MUST intervene to enable (predestine) the presence of ANY soul in the glorious halls of Heaven, because the Bible is clear that ALL have sinned and by our own continuance in that sin, have predestined ourselves unto Hell's justice.

God could not make it any more plain in this passage or throughout Scripture. If any person goes to Hell, it will be because of their own sinful words and actions. Justice is not errant when it closes the chapter of a rebellious sinner, mired eternally in the fiery darkness of Hell's prison. It merely has acknowledged the self-judgment of the ill choices made by the self-convicted creature to tenaciously hold onto the iniquity that has weighed him down into the forsaken eternity of the pits of torment.

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Exodus 32:32-33 states: "Yet now,

if thou wilt forgive their sin-; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."

First, it should be noted that Moses did not refer to the Lamb's Book of Life which was written before the foundation of the world (Rev. 17:8; 21:27). The names of God's elect will never be blotted out or removed from that eternal Book.

Moses had such an attachment and affection for the nation of Israel he was willing to be blotted out of the book if God would not forgive their sin. God's book referred to in Exodus seems to be a register of all those living on the earth at any given time whose names are blotted out at death. Psalm 69:28 declares: "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous." Isaiah 4:3 states: "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem." Both of these verses support the idea that God has a book of the living. It is also obvious that people may be blotted out of the book of the living.

The Hebrew word for "blot" is *machah* which comes from the root which means to stroke or rub, to abolish, blot out, to destroy, put out, wipe away or out. (Condensed from Strong's Concordance #4229, p. 64 in the Hebrew Dictionary).

TOM ROSS



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

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

DOMA ON DEFENSE BEFORE SUPREME COURT

(WNS)--The U.S. Supreme Court cast a skeptical eye on the Defense of Marriage Act Wednesday, but on federalism grounds rather than equal protection. So if the court strikes down the law, it would probably do so because the law overrules states on marriage, rather than because the law discriminates against homosexuals. The states' rights arguments that helped advocates of California's Proposition 8 on Mar. 26 before the high court played against DOMA proponents the next day. Section 3 of DOMA defines marriage as between one man and one woman for the purposes of federal benefits. That means that in states that recognize same-sex marriage, those gay married couples wouldn't be eligible for federal marriage benefits. Justice Anthony Kennedy, a big believer in states' rights and the key vote in this case, characterized the federal law as an imposition on states. "We're [only] helping the states if they do what we want them to do," he stated. Paul Clement, defending DOMA on behalf of the U.S. House of Representatives, rebutted that the word "marriage" already exists in more than a thousand federal statutes, and DOMA was simply defining what that word meant.

GRUESOME PHOTOS, TESTIMONY MARK

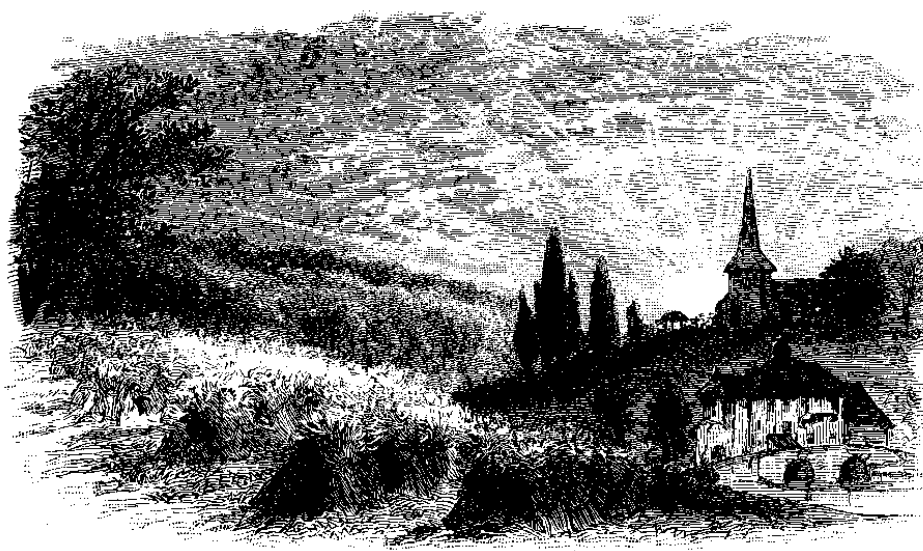
ABORTIONIST'S MURDER TRIAL

(WNS)--The defense lawyer for a Philadelphia abortionist who allegedly killed seven babies born alive tried Wednesday to prove the first baby died in the womb and that the mother was not as far along as the prosecution claims. A young woman who was 17 when she chose to terminate "Baby A" gave hours long testimony in Dr. Kermit Gosnell's murder trial, which began in March. According to the prosecution, the expectant mother was almost 30 weeks pregnant when she arrived at Gosnell's facility. One of Gosnell's medical assistants, who earlier testified that the spines of late-term babies were routinely severed with scissors after delivery, added to that claim, saying she was disturbed by the baby's size and rosy color. But Gosnell's defense lawyer, Jack McMahon, said no babies survive after the drug digoxin is injected into the womb. Gosnell gave the drug to the teen, according to her medical records, which also show her aunt paid \$2,750 in cash to take the baby's life. McMahon also tried to show the teenager's pregnancy could have been less advanced than originally thought.

FIFTH GRADE QUIZ UNDER ATTACK OVER CAUSES OF 9-11

(WNS)--Fifth graders in a public school in Corpus Christi, Tex., were learning that the U.S. deserved the 9-11 attacks because of our bad behavior toward other nations in the world. Kara Sands is the mother of a student at Flour Bluff Intermediate School. She reviewed a quiz her son brought home from school and found the following question: "Why might the United States be a target for terrorism?" The answer the teacher was looking for was B: "Decisions we made in the United States have had negative effects on people elsewhere." Other

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possible answers were (A.) "Other people just don't like Americans," (C.) "Terrorists hate everyone," and (D.) "None of the above." Sands posted a picture of the quiz on her Facebook page, and local television stations took it from there. The school board ended up agreeing with Sands that the quiz and a related video called "Remembering September 11th" were inappropriate for the school, and would be discontinued.

STARBUCKS CEO AFFIRMS SUPPORT OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

(WNS)—In late March Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz adamantly reaffirmed his company's support for same-sex marriage. His comments have refueled a boycott campaign by the National Organization for Marriage (NOM). The topic surfaced during Starbucks' annual meeting in Seattle. Tom Strobhar, a Starbucks shareholder and founder of the Corporate Morality Action Center, complained that the company's public support for gay marriage last year resulted in smaller profits for shareholders. Schultz affirmed the company's economic vitality and its social activism. "The lens in which we are making that decision is through the lens of our people," he said. "We employ over 200,000 people in this company, and we want to embrace diversity. Of all kinds." He added that if Strobhar wasn't happy with his return on investment, he was free to invest elsewhere.

SCOUT'S HONOR: WE WILL NOT CAVE

(WNS)—On Mar. 23 a group of parents and scoutmasters gathered in Orlando, Fla., to announce the debut of OnMyHonor.net, an initiative to keep sex and politics out of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). According to CitizenLink, representatives from 13 states pledged to oppose any revision to Scout policy that would allow openly homosexual men to hold positions of leadership. Since its founding in 1910, BSA has traditionally excluded gay men because their lifestyle is inconsistent with the Scout oath to be morally straight. During the rally, John Stemberger, spokesman for OnMyHonor.net and president of the Florida Family Policy

Council, clarified that the initiative would continue to allow anyone to participate as Scouts, no matter their sexual orientation. But it would prevent homosexual men from openly promoting their lifestyle and political agenda from positions of leadership. The BSA has been under pressure from gay activists to allow open homosexuals in leadership for more than a decade. Last year, pro-homosexual groups convinced several corporations, including UPS and Intel, to cease funding BSA after its board members unanimously affirmed traditional leadership policies at their annual meeting.

CHRISTIAN GROUPS ENDORSE THE UN'S FIRST-EVER INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE TREATY

(WNS)—After seven years of back and forth, the United Nations in early April, with the backing of the United States, passed the first-ever treaty regulating the international arms trade. The treaty also gained the unusual backing of a number of Christian organizations, including the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and the National Council of Churches (NCC). Only three countries—Syria, North Korea, and Iran—voted against the treaty, which

garnered 154 "yes" votes. Twenty-three countries, including Russia and China, abstained from the vote, indicating a not insubstantial level of unease. The treaty is likely to be mostly symbolic. Its enforcement depends on the 50 countries ratifying it: the United States, the world's largest arms exporter, almost certainly will not. To win ratification the treaty needs the support of two-thirds of the U.S. Senate, which looks unlikely with Republican opposition. The National Rifle Association, a heavyweight in U.S. politics, opposes the treaty on the grounds that it could infringe on Americans' gun rights and add burdensome regulations on American gun dealers.

"STOMP ON JESUS" PROF CLAIMS FAITH

(WNS)—Deandre Poole, the Florida Atlantic University (FAU) professor who allegedly told his students to "stomp on Jesus," said in an interview with *Inside Higher Ed* that he was just doing his job. He also says he's a Christian who understands the uproar his assignment caused, even as he defends it. During a recent lesson in his communications class, Poole instructed students to step on a piece of paper with Jesus' name on it. Those instructions, Poole explained, were part of a lesson plan detailed in the

instructor's guide to the Intercultural Communications textbook. He claimed the exercise was supposed to help students understand the power of symbols and their meaning. He said after he gave them the instructions, most of the students hesitated to step on the piece of paper. That moment of hesitation was the point of the lesson, he claimed.

JUDGE: GIVE TEENS ABORTION DRUG WITHOUT A PRESCRIPTION

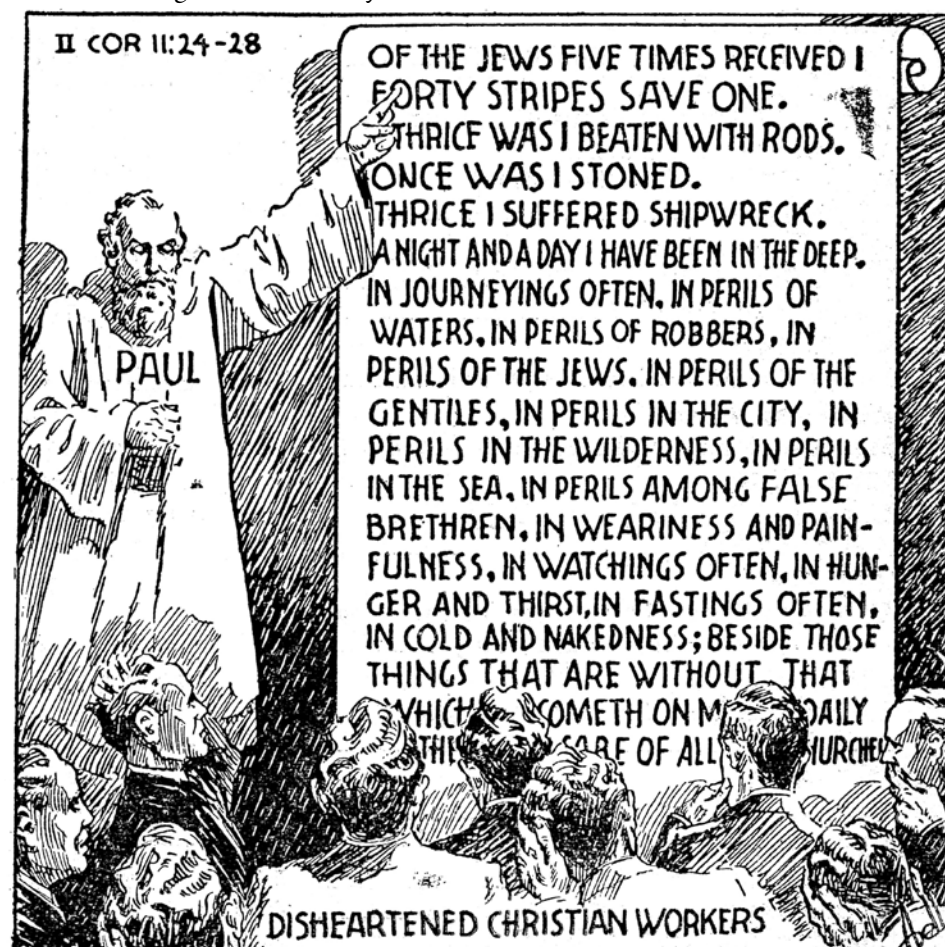
(WNS)—A federal judge ruled in April that the so-called morning-after pill must be made available over the counter to women and girls of all ages, according to a report in *The New York Times*. The government had required a prescription for girls 16 and younger. The drug, sold under brand names like Plan B and Ella, prevents implantation of a fertilized egg or causes an early abortion. It is marketed as a method of "emergency" contraception. In 2011, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius ignored recommendations by the Food and Drug Administration to make the drug available to all without a prescription. Her decision surprised many given the Obama administration's strong support for abortion.

ARIZONA TOWN APPROVES SAME-SEX CIVIL UNIONS

(WNS)—In a small, former mining town turned artist colony, the city council approved on Apr. 2 an ordinance recognizing civil unions for same-sex couples. The measure—adopted with a vote of 5-2 following an emotional three-hour hearing—makes Bisbee the first Arizona city to validate civil unions. Arizona Attorney General Tom Horne has promised to go to court to block the ordinance, calling it unconstitutional. The measure attempts to change state law on things such as community property, something only the state can do, he said. Under the measure, same-sex couples can enter a civil union and receive the same rights as married couples simply by walking into City Hall and paying \$76—the same fee couples pay for a marriage license in the county, *The Sierra Vista Herald* reported. The city clerk would then issue the couple a certificate of the civil union.

NEW DISEASE PLAGUES

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HOMOSEXUAL COMMUNITY

(WNS)--When Brett Shaad, of West Hollywood, Calif., got bacterial meningitis last week and died, it was a tragedy. But when officials said the disease could be transmitted sexually and that Shaad was openly homosexual, the news sent shudders through the homosexual community. Last Friday, Los Angeles County officials warned sexually active homosexual men to be aware of the disease. Health officials are doing tests to see if the strain of illness is similar to the meningococcal infections that has circulated among homosexuals in New York City since 2010. That disease has infected 22 people and has resulted in seven deaths. "We don't want to panic people," said West Hollywood Councilman John Duran. "But we learned 30 years ago the consequences of delay in the response to AIDS."

DELAWARE PLANNED PARENTHOOD FACILITY ACCUSED OF GOSNELL-LIKE HORRORS

(WNS)--Two former workers from Planned Parenthood of Delaware say the Wilmington abortion center's unsanitary and unsafe conditions put women at risk. In an interview with a local ABC affiliate, Jayne Mitchell-Werbrich and Joyce Vasikonis described soiled operating tables not cleaned between patients and abortionists who refused to wear gloves. The women, who are registered nurses, said they quit their jobs to protect their medical licenses in the event a patient came to any harm. "It was just unsafe," Mitchell-Werbrich said. "I couldn't tell you how ridiculously unsafe it was." Vasikonis said she feared women could be exposed to AIDS or Hepatitis because fluids were not cleaned from the rooms between patients. The Planned Parenthood facility, the women said, should be closed.

MORMONS RETREAT FROM MARRIAGE?

(WNS)--Is the Mormon Church retreating from the marriage fight? That's the contention of an article in the liberal magazine "Mother Jones." The magazine contends that during last month's oral arguments in the *Hollingsworth v. Perry* Supreme Court

case, "faith-based groups were on prominent display: the Methodists supporting marriage equality, the Westboro Baptists suggesting (per usual) that 'God hates fags,' the Catholics both for and against gay marriage, clergy of all stripes. But one group that wasn't there in any official capacity was the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—a.k.a. the Mormons—which perhaps more than any other religious group was responsible for getting Prop. 8 passed in the first place." The "Mother Jones" article says the official policy of the church hasn't changed, but has seen "backlash from the flock."

IRS TELLS AGENTS IT CAN SNOOP ON EMAILS WITHOUT WARRANT, INTERNAL DOCUMENTS SHOW.

(FNS)-- In a recent online article posted on FoxNews the Internal Revenue Service believes it doesn't need permission to root through emails, texts or other forms of electronic correspondence, according to recently released internal agency documents.

The documents, which were obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request by the American Civil Liberties Union, reveal that tax department agents have been operating under the assumption that they can bypass warrants. The ACLU claims this would in turn violate the Fourth Amendment.

According to a 2009 IRS employee handbook, though, the tax agency said the Fourth Amendment does not protect emails because Internet users don't "have a reasonable expectation of privacy in such communications."

A lawyer for the agency reiterated the policy in 2010. And the current online version of the IRS manual says that no warrant is required for emails that are stored by an Internet storage provider for more than 180 days.

"This is an affront not only to our system of checks and balances, but also to our fundamental right to privacy," Colorado Democratic Sen. Mark Udall said in a statement Thursday, adding that he wants Congress to overhaul the Electronic Communications Privacy Act.

NSA DATA CENTER FRONT AND CENTER IN DEBATE OVER LIBERTY, SECURITY AND PRIVACY.

(FNS)-- A story recently reported

by Fox News states, that about twenty-five miles due south of Salt Lake City, is a massive construction project nearing its completion. The heavily secured site belongs to the National Security Agency. "The spy center" -- that's what some of the locals call it.

The NSA says the Utah Data Center is a facility for the intelligence community that will have a major focus on cyber security. Some published reports suggest it could hold 5 zettabytes of data. A zettabyte is 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000.

Asked if the Utah Data Center would hold the data of American citizens, General Keith Alexander said, "No...we don't hold data on U.S. citizens," adding that the NSA staff "take protecting your civil liberties and privacy as the most important thing that they do, and securing this nation."

But critics, including a former NSA employee, say the data center is front and center in the debate over liberty, security and privacy. "It raises the most serious questions about the vast amount of data that could be kept in one place for many, many different sources said a former employee. He also stated that "Americans should be concerned about letting the government go too far in the name of security. It's in secret so you don't really know. It's benign, right. If I haven't -- and if I haven't done anything wrong it doesn't matter. The only way you can have perfect security is have a perfect surveillance state. That's George Orwell. That's 1984. That's what that would look like."

Another NSA whistleblower and former employee says, "It's about the possibility that the government's stunning new capacity to collect, store and analyze data could be abused. It's really a-- turnkey situation, where it could be turned quickly and become a totalitarian state pretty quickly. The capacities to do that is being set up. Now it's a question of if we get the wrong person in office, or if certain people set up their network internally in government, they could make that happen

quickly."

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS FEMINISM DANGEROUS, SAYS RUSSIAN ORTHODOX HEAD

(WNS)--The head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill, said this week that feminism is "very dangerous" because it creates the illusion of freedom while in fact subjecting women to economic and sexual exploitation. "I find very dangerous this phenomenon, which is called feminism, because feminist organizations proclaim a pseudo-freedom of women that should...be manifested outside marriage and outside the family," said Kirill, quoted in an awkward translation by the Interfax news agency. Kirill added: "Man turns his sight outward, he should work, make money. While a woman is always focused inwards towards her children, her home. If this exceptionally important role of a woman is destroyed, everything will be destroyed as a consequence."

FRENCH LAWMAKERS IGNORE PROTESTS, APPROVE GAY MARRIAGE

(WNS)--Traditional marriage supporters demonstrate near the French Senate on April 4. Months of protests from hundreds of thousands of traditional marriage supporters have failed to withstand a shove toward homosexual marriage in France. This morning, members of the French Senate raised their hands in a vote legalizing same-sex marriage and the adoption of children by gay couples. Although Parliament still has to vote on minor amendments to the legislation, the portion approving same-sex marriage is a done deal. The complete gay-rights package is expected to receive final approval in May. It will make France the 13th nation to legalize same-sex marriage. Uruguay will be the 12th: Lawmakers there in mid-April approved a gay marriage measure and sent it to their president, who is expected to sign it.

Tune in to the Berea Baptist Broadcast

STATION	TIME	DIAL	WATTS
WCNA, Myrtle, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	95.9.....	3,000 FM
WCTT, Corbin, KY	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	680.....	5,000 AM
WFTA, Tupelo, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	101.9	3,000 FM
KARI, Blaine, WA	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m....	550.....	5,000 AM
KPRV, Heavener, OK	Sunday 8:30 - 9:00 a.m.....	92.5	6,000 FM



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



Are the Saints Now Reigning with Christ?

Part I

Gospel millennialists affirm that the saints are now reigning with Christ. They totally reject any idea of a future reign of Christ and His saints on this earth. They contend that all Christians are already kings and priests, and as sure as the saints are now priests, so sure they are kings and reigning now with Christ.

I shall give a few quotes from amillennial writers to prove that this is their position. H. Leo Boles, a Campbellite preacher, has written: "I think the Bible teaches that the Lord's people are now reigning with Christ. . . In speaking of the saints, Peter says: 'But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.' (I Pet. 2:9.) 'A royal priesthood' means a kingly priesthood; a priesthood of kings or a kingdom of priests. In the church or kingdom of our Lord the two elements of kingship and priesthood are united in every faithful child of God. Every Christian is a king and a priest; kings to reign with him and priests to offer spiritual sacrifices to him. As sure as the saints are priests, so sure are they kings; if kings, then reigning with him" (*Unfulfilled Prophecy*, p. 161).

Robert L. Whitelaw, writing upon Matthew 19:27-30, Mark 10:38-41, and Luke 18:28-30, says: "This reigning and this rewarding is to be now, in this present time, with persecutions. . ." (*The Gospel Millennium and Obedience to Scripture*, p. 19).

Jay Adams, a Presbyterian, says: "According to the best texts, Revelation 5:9, 10 says the saints are now reigning on the earth, and Revelation 1:6 assures the reader that God has made the church on earth a 'kingdom of priests'" (*The Time is at Hand*, p. 92).

Unlike amillennialists, premillennialists hold that the reign of the saints with Christ is future. We

believe that the reign cannot take place until Christ returns and gives out the crowns to the saints. Between the first and second resurrection there will be a thousand-year reign of Christ and His saints on this earth.

MY INQUIRY

My purpose in this article is to look into the New Testament Scriptures and to see if the Bible teaches that the saints are now reigning with Christ as amillennialists assert. If the saints are presently reigning with Christ the Scriptures should plainly say so. If amillennialists are wrong and the reign is yet future as premillennialists contend, then this must also be plainly stated. It behooves us all to receive what God says on any subject, regardless of whether it fits our own or any one else's theology. When Divine inspiration speaks plainly on a subject it is our duty to receive it as truth. We must not try to change it or explain it away (Rev. 22:18-19).

I shall not in this article appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures, for you cannot prove anything to an amillennialist by the Old Testament. I say this for two reasons. First, he holds that this present age of gospel grace and victory, with Christ on His throne, is the promised glory that was to follow the cross foretold by all the Old Testament prophets. Second, he believes that all Old Testament passages must be twisted and explained away so as to fit his preconceived notion.

In case some believe I overstated the case in my second reason I shall let the gospel millennialists speak for themselves. Robert L. Whitelaw says: "In short, the 'millennium' portrayed in Zech. 12-14 is the Gospel Age, beginning with the earthly ministry of our Lord, no matter what difficulties appear in the more obscure or figurative parts of the passage" (*op.*

cit., p. 6). Still again: "Those who have taken this position, setting aside all human preconceptions on what the O.T. passage seemed to have meant, or should have meant, except in conformity to this rule, have concluded that the only millennial view supported by the Bible without reservation or contradiction is the Gospel Age Millennium view, miscalled 'Amillennialism'" (*op. cit.*, p. 21).

Whitelaw discloses in his statements that amillennialism begins with the premise that premillennialism is a great heresy not found in the Scriptures. The many passages which seem to allege premillennialism must be spiritualized away so as to fit into the scheme of amillennialism. According to amillennialists, the words in prophecy are "Oriental figures" and "non-essential details" which must give way to the greater spiritual meaning.

Why do amillennialists spiritualize away the literal meaning of words in their prophetic scheme? I shall let one within their own ranks give the answer. Floyd E. Hamilton says: "Now I must frankly admit that a literal interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies gives us just such a picture of an earthly reign of the Messiah as the premillennialist pictures" (*The Basis of Millennial Faith*, p. 38). So at least one in their camp admits that amillennialism is an escapism from premillennialism.

Conservative amillennialists only spiritualize some of the prophecies in the Old Testament, but the liberal in their camp spiritualize just about all prophecy in the Old Testament. Conservative amillennialists do not apply this rule of spiritualizing to other doctrines in the Bible as it would destroy many doctrines which they believe. The spiritualization of prophecy by amillennialists is wrong for some of the following reasons: (1) It began with the idea that premillennialism is a great heresy not taught in Scripture. (2) It says words are unimportant in prophecy, but the Bible says otherwise in Revelation 1:3 and 22:18-19. (3) It makes the prophecies of the Scriptures of private interpretation, contrary to II Peter 1:20.

ROMANS 5:17

The verse reads: "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Amillennialists are absolutely sure that this verse declares that believers are now reigning in spiritual life over sin, Satan, and the world.

Personally, I marvel that these men fail to see the tenses of the verbs here. The receiving of abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness is now. But note the words: "shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Paul puts the reign of the saints in the future tense. This is strange language indeed if the saints were then reigning with Christ. This verse speaks of a future reign of the saints, not a present reign as amillennialists contend. The saints are to sit on thrones, wear crowns, and rule the nations by and through Jesus Christ, and not on account of any works or merit on their part. The future reign of the saints is a privilege which Christ secured for His people.

Please observe as I shall go on to other verses in the New Testament that the reign of the saints is always spoken of in the future tense. No one single time is it ever put in the present tense. This fact alone is enough to overthrow the amillennial position if we take seriously "the words of this prophecy" (Rev. 1:3).

I CORINTHIANS 4:8

"Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you."

The problem in the Corinthian church was that they were settling down to enjoy the benefits of the gospel without suffering and self-denial. They had settled down to enjoy the world, believing that because of their many spiritual gifts they had entered into the time of the Messiah's kingdom on earth. The Corinthians thought that they were already reigning with Christ in His kingdom.

Did the Apostle Paul agree with them that they were already kings reigning in the kingdom? Did he mistake that the saints had full supply, enrichment and sovereign

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Saints Now Reigning

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power? Or, did he condemn them for being “puffed up” in the church and of presuming to conduct themselves as if they were in possession of all this? The answers to these questions are not hard to discover.

Paul’s words were spoken in the keenest irony. It is as if he said: “Already seated are you! Already growing rich! Apart from us you have attained your kingship!” These words were designed to rebuke the Corinthians for acting as though they had already entered into their reign as kings on the earth. He is telling them that it is not the time for the saints to reign as kings. Paul does express a wish that they had entered their reign, and that he and Apollos might reign with them. In other words, Paul wished that the future kingdom might come.

Instead of Paul and his friend having entered the reign of Christ and the saints, they were counted as fools for Christ’s sake. They were persecuted, defamed, despised, reviled and beaten (I Cor. 4:9-13). Kings who rule with sovereign power do not experience such things. If the glorious millennium had come and the saints were reigning with Christ over the nations, Paul and Apollos would not have been suffering for Christ’s sake. Instead of reigning over the wicked, Paul and his companion were being reigned over by wicked and ungodly men in this evil world.

Consider the words: **“I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.”** These words make it clear that neither Paul nor the Corinthians had yet entered their reign, nor had they yet been crowned as kings and given kingly authority. If Paul and the Corinthians were not reigning as kings with Christ in their lifetime, how can others presume they are now reigning with Christ? In Paul’s mind the suffering for Christ was going on in his lifetime, and at some future time he and the Corinthians would reign as kings.

The words in the latter part of I Corinthians 4:8 show that one group of the saints could not reign as kings apart from others, and that when some enter the reign they would all

enter it together. This makes the reign of the saints impossible as long as Christ has suffering saints in this world. The saints living today cannot enter the reign without the dead saints, seeing all must reign at the same time. Hence Christ must come and raise the dead before all the saints reign with their Lord.

This passage puts the reign of the saints in the future. It does not declare we are now reigning with Christ as kings. It affirms that all the saints will reign at the same time in the future. Christ has already made every blood-washed saint a king (Rev. 5:5-6; 5:9-10), but they are uncrowned kings until Christ comes and they receive their crowns. **“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing”** (II Tim. 4:8). **“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away”** (I Pet. 5:4).

Those who think they are reigning now should meditate upon these words of Paul in I Corinthians 4:8.

II TIMOTHY 2:12

“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us” (II Tim. 2:12).

Christians now suffer for Christ, and the Bible says that **“through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God”** (Acts 14:22). According to Paul in II Timothy 2:12, those Christians who now suffer for Christ shall at some future time reign with Christ. The words **“shall reign”** are future tense. They place the reign of the saints in the future, not in the present time as amillennialists do. No amount of fancy twisting and turning of the verse can make these plain words to mean the saints are now reigning with Christ.

If Christians are now suffering for Christ at the hands of a God hating world, then we can be certain they are not reigning as kings on earth at present. Reigning kings do not suffer, seeing they have sovereign power. If the verse read: **“Those who now suffer with Christ are not reigning with Him,”** then there might be some hope for amillennialists, but it does not so read.

Pay attention to the words: **“. . . we shall also reign with him.”** When Christ reigns the saints will reign with Him. We are to reign **“with him,”** not without Him as postmillennialists teach. Christ and His saints shall all reign together at some future time. Now is the time of suffering; the reigning comes hereafter. They do not occur at the same time.

REVELATION 2:25-27

“But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.”

This is a promise from Christ to the church at Thyatira and to other

churches across the centuries (Rev. 2:29). In these words Christ makes the definite promise to His saints that He will give them authority over the nations and that those who have such authority shall rule with a rod of iron. The overcoming and keeping of Christ’s works is now. The authority over the nations and the rule over them are in the future tense. The promise that the overcomer shall reign over the nations follows after the admonition to hold fast until the Lord Jesus Christ comes. This proves that the ruling takes place after the Lord comes, not before.

In the next issue I shall deal with other verses like Revelation 5:9-10 and 20:4-9. Be sure to read the next installment on this inquiry.



Why Did You Come to Christ?

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

You profess that you are a believer. You profess that Christ died for you. You profess that you have been born again. You profess that you are saved. You profess that you have repented and come to Christ - that you have come in a genuine and saving way to Him. May it be so! But this is not the case with most of humanity. Most people in this world have not come in a saving way to Christ. Most do not even profess to have come to Christ. Many of this world’s inhabitants, perhaps most, have never even heard the name of the Son of God. They have not come. Others have never heard that name used except used as a curse. They have not come. But what about those who live in places where the gospel is preached? What about in our own country? What about the majority of folk around us who have never come to Christ? What about your family, friends and neighbors? Why have so many of them not come to Christ? And we ask, why did you come and they did not? Why did you come to Christ?

You say you came because you saw yourself as a lost sinner in need of a Savior. That you are a sinner is most certainly true. All men are sinners. All



men need a Savior. God has provided only one Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost said of Jesus Christ, **“Neither is there salvation in any**

other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). So it is that in order to be saved, men and women must see themselves as sinners and must come to Christ. However, just because an individual knows that he or she is a sinner will not cause them to repent and come to Christ. Those around us who have not come to Christ will admit that they are sinners. This preacher has never yet met a person who claimed to be sinless. In spite of this knowledge they have not come to Christ. We say again; just knowing of one’s own sin will not cause an individual to come to Christ.

You say that you saw yourself such an awful sinner as to have no hope within yourself. You say that you saw Jesus Christ and His finished work as your only hope and so you came. It must be that you saw yourself differently than others see themselves. It must be that you saw Christ differently than others

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Why Did You Come

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see Him. But why did you see yourself in that lost condition when others around you do not? Why did you see Christ as God's Lamb sacrificed in your place? Why did you see Him as your only hope? Why is there this difference between you and them? So again we ask the question: why did you come to Christ and they did not?

Perhaps you have a brother, sister, other close relative, or friend who is not a believer. Perhaps you have witnessed to them, prayed for them, and done all you can to influence them to come to Christ. You may have taken them to hear preaching, but still they have not come to Christ. Why is it that you came to Christ and they have not? Is it because you are more intelligent than they? Are you wiser than they? Are you better than they? What was the cause of your coming to Christ? You may answer, I came because I was willing to come. Perhaps you say that others do not come to Christ because they are unwilling to come. We readily admit the truth of both those statements. Some are willing to come, but the majority are unwilling. Why are some willing and why do some remain unwilling? The question remains: why were you willing?

Now then, you must admit to one of these two possibilities. One possibility is that you were willing to come to Christ because of something superior in your person or character. In that case you are better than those who refuse to come. If that is the case then we must conclude that God saves only good people; or at least only people who are better than others. According to that view, He must only save people who are superior in some way to others. That must be the case if we say that God saves individuals because something in them causes them to come to Christ. Do we dare say that God saves people based upon their innate goodness? That would be saying that salvation is based upon works. In contrast to that idea, the Lord Jesus Christ said, **"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"** (Luke 5:32). Paul also made it clear that salvation is not of works when he wrote, **"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" (Eph. 2:8-9). We may rightly conclude from the Bible that men and women do not come to Christ because of their superiority or goodness or works. Our own honest appraisal of ourselves is in agreement with that. We each know within our own hearts that we who have come to Christ are not better than those who refuse to come.

The only other possibility is this: you became willing to come to Christ because of something outside yourself. If there was nothing in you that caused you to come to Christ, then it logically must follow that it was something outside yourself that caused you to come to Him. If that is the case we must conclude that God somehow worked in you to cause you to be willing to come to Christ. This is the truth according to the Bible. But human nature objects! To admit that would mean that God deals with some people differently than He does with others. Surely you will agree that if God had worked in your lost friend or relative in the same way as He did in you they would have come. After all, God is not a wimp. No one **"can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"** (Dan. 4:35). Nevertheless, our human nature rejects the idea that God has a right to do as He pleases with His creation. Humanistic ideas cause us to think that God must act in the way that we think is right. We make all kinds of judgments as to what we perceive to be "fair" and "right." In doing so, we would deny to God the freedom, right and ability to do what we demand for ourselves. Consider this: we demand the freedom to choose our friends and our spouses, but we would deny that freedom to God. We demand the freedom to choose whom we want to inherit our possessions when we die. We demand the right to choose whom we will allow into our company and our homes. Fraternal organizations choose those who shall be members of their lodges. We Baptists even vote on those individuals that we will accept as members in our congregations. We think all this is right and proper. But God cannot, in our thinking, choose whom He will befriend. We demand the freedom to persuade an individual to become our friend. Men demand the right to court the person we want

for a wife. Women demand the right to choose whom they will marry. But we will not allow God to choose whom He wants for His friends. We will allow that it is right for a man to woo a woman whom he has chosen in order to persuade her to be his wife. But we will not allow God the right to woo those whom He has chosen in order to persuade them to be His friends. How vain and self-centered we are! How shallow and unscriptural is our thinking!

Does the Bible teach that God works differently in some people than in others? Did He ever make a difference - a choice - between individuals or groups or individuals? The answer is yes! God certainly made a choice between Israel and the Egyptians. This is clear from Exodus 11:7 which says: **"But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel."** God put a difference between His chosen people and the people of Egypt. He chose a tribal people; the descendants of Abraham. He did not choose the Egyptians in spite of the fact that their knowledge, accomplishments and civilization were in many ways superior to that of the Israelites. Remember, both Israel and Egypt were made up of individuals so that individuals were involved in God's choice between these two nations. God made a difference not only in those who were to be His people when He chose Abraham and his descendants, He also made a difference between the tribes of Israel. He chose the tribe of Levi to be His priests. No other tribe was allowed to serve as priests. He chose the tribe of Judah as the kingly tribe. Christ chose whom He would be His apostles. He clearly stated that fact in John 15:16. There we read, **"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..."** He chooses men today to be His preachers. And in Revelation 17:14, those who will be with Christ in His glorious end-time victory **"...are called, and chosen, and faithful."** We cannot deny that God makes choices among humanity unless we are willing to deny the Bible. We cannot deny that

in making such choices He makes a difference between people.

The New Testament speaks of God having made a difference between individuals when it says, **"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world..."** (Eph. 1:4). To another congregation Paul wrote: **"Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God"** (I Thess. 1:4). About God's people we read in Psalm 110:3: **"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power..."** and Paul wrote, **"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure"** (Philippians 2:13). It is certainly Biblical to say that God works in some individuals to cause them to do His will. It is also Biblical to say that the choice is God's as to those in whom He will work. Regarding those whom God chooses Paul wrote these words: **"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence"** (I Cor. 1:26-29). From these verses we see that God did indeed make a choice between people. He made this choice before the foundation of the world. His choice was not based on human goodness or willingness or superiority. In fact, He has chosen the foolish, weak, base and despised. This is clearly illustrated in the case of Jacob and Esau. Jacob turned out to be a crook and a scoundrel. Esau, on the other hand, was a pretty good fellow. God chose Jacob over Esau before the children were born because His choice was not based on their achievements or good or evil in them. God demonstrated this by choosing one over the other before either was born. Paul makes this clear in Romans 9:11 where he writes of Jacob and Esau saying: **"For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him**

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The Words of God or the Words of Man

By Chad Johnson
of Auburn, Kentucky

(Which Have The Final Authority)? **"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe"** (I Thess. 2:13).

"He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:47).

I have been very troubled as of late at the attacks from false prophets on the authority of the Bible in the life of a Christian. The Bible says much of itself as being the Word of God. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. We know from God's Word that Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, and he also has ministers that he does the same for. The men have on a robe of religion, but inwardly they are wolves. This can be the only explanation for those who claim to be saved and men of God, yet write words that attempt to destroy God's Word. If we have no final authority on spiritual matters, each of us will do what is right in our own eyes. If the Bible is not completely true then who decides what part is true? What lies and demonic influences stand against God's Word? In I Thessalonians 2:13, the Apostle Paul thanked God that when they heard them preach the Word of God, that they did not look at it as their words, but as the truth, the Word of God. These men preached the Old Testament they had at that time. The Bible tells us in John 17:17 that **"thy word is truth."**

The Word of God works effectually in those who believe. The word

effectually means producing an effect, or the effect desired or intended, having adequate power or force to produce the desired purpose.

This verse plainly tells us that those who are saved, when they read or hear the Word of God preached that it has the power to sanctify them. It, the Word of God, cleanses our way (Psalm 119:9). The Apostle Paul said that the law was our school master that brought us to Christ. The law of God shows us our sin and points us to Christ. In I Peter 1:23 we read that we are born again by an incorruptible seed, the Word of God. This seed liveth and abideth for ever. No man is saved without hearing the Word of God. No man can know Christ and their need of Him without the law of God (Eph. 1:13). So beware of lost men who teach that the Bible is not God's Word. They know not God because if they did they would magnify God's Word, not tear it down.



Why Did You Come

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that calleth."

God's stated purpose - **"the purpose of God according to election"** - is this: **"That no flesh should glory in his presence"** as quoted in context above. No man can boast of his goodness, intelligence or superiority as being the cause of his coming to Christ! Good men do not come to Christ because of their goodness. Wise and intelligent persons do not come to Christ because of their wisdom or intelligence. Men and women of superior gifts do not come to Christ because of those things. Men and women come to Christ because they are drawn to Him by God. Jesus said it this way: **"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 6:44). God the Father draws men and women to Christ. He draws those whom He is pleased to call; those whom He has chosen. Those drawn by God will be raised up by Christ at the last day. This is the blessed resurrection. All these things are clearly stated in the verses just quoted! In this drawing process, God does indeed cause some men and women to see both their awful sin and

hopelessness. He causes them to see Christ as their only possible Savior. He quickens them and uses the Bible, His Word, to teach them truth so that they understand, repent and believe the gospel.

All these things being true, we see that we cannot glory or boast about anything in us! The cause of our coming to Christ was not something within us. We are neither good nor even better than those around us who have not come to Christ. We are neither wiser nor more intelligent. Paul wrote of the differences God makes in people in this way: **"For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"** (I Cor. 4:7). Who makes the differences in people? Who made you to differ? Why do some men come to Christ and others do not? The Bible teaches that it is God who makes the difference. Only in this way can it be that **"no flesh should glory in His presence."** Give all glory to God! He is the cause of your coming in a saving way to Christ.

If you have not yet come to Christ we urge you most earnestly to repent and do so. Do not wait for some special sign or manifestation or experience. If you see yourself as a sinner and grieve over your sins, turn and come to Christ for it is **"God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."** No person was ever willing to repent and come to Christ whom God did not cause to be willing. Jesus said, **"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"** (John 6:37). Christ does not here speak of coming to the church nor to the front at the close of a religious meeting. You can do that and go away still lost in your sins. Coming to Christ is not a physical act. It is a purely spiritual matter between you and Him. Christ says **"come to me!"** If you are willing to repent and come to Christ, then come! Repent and believe the gospel! Come and welcome! Come and be saved! Christ will receive you and will not cast you out! Heed this Scripture: **"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will,**

let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). Christ's churches say come! If you are a hearer of the Word, come! If you are thirsty for the water of life, come! If you are willing, come! There is bread for the hungry and water for the thirsty. If you hunger and thirst after righteousness, come! Remember! Jesus said, **"him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."**



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 3-1-2013 to 3-31-2013

Beginning Balance	\$6,567.59
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Calvary B. C., Everson, WA	100.00
.....	425.00
TOTAL	6,992.59
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	363.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$363.98
.....	\$6,628.61
Interest	+ .05
.....	6,628.66
Less Corbin, KY des.	-1,003.72
ENDING BALANCE	\$5,624.94

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$1,163.72
RECEIPTS:	
TOTAL	1,163.72
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT	160.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,003.72

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 3-1-2013 to 3-31-2013

Beginning Balance	\$5,588.58
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	50.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	50.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, IL	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	313.45
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gary Howard, Eagle, AK	110.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	45.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Parkway L. B. C., Springfield, OR	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	60.00
Anonymous	200.00
Dividing checks	200.00
Sub Total	\$2,565.95
TOTAL	\$8,154.53
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	535.00
Postage	724.01
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Dividing checks	200.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,934.97
ENDING BALANCE	\$4,219.56

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Little Sewell Baptist Church and Pastor Ray Sexton would like to announce that, Elder Ernie Lucas of Appomattox, VA will preach a series of messages in anticipation of revival from May 6th thru 10th. All are invited to attend.

For more information please contact Pastor Sexton at (304) 438-5917.

The Philadelphia Baptist Church of Decatur, AL and pastor Ted Tweet would like to announce their Revival/Quarterly fellowship for May 15th thru 19th. Elder Jim Tweet will be guest speaker for the revival and Elder Larry Lafferty will also speak on Saturday for the fellowship meeting. Service times for Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday are at 7 p.m. and Saturday at 10:00 a.m. with meal after the service. Sunday service times are 10:00 a.m. Sunday school; 11:00 a.m. and 2 p.m. All are invited to attend.

The Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs, Louisiana and pastor Jerry Dodson would like to announce their 17th Annual Bible Conference for June 7th thru 9th.

Scheduled speakers are Elders Tom Horn of Pensacola, FL, David O'Neal of Tulsa, OK, Larry Wilson of Oakdale, LA, Eldon Joslin of Birmingham, AL, and Nathaniel Hille of Caldwell, KS.

The Calvary Baptist Church of Piqua, Ohio, is in need of a pastor. Any interested party may contact Terry Allen at (937) 773-9272.

The Faith Missionary Baptist Church of Cobbitty, South Wales, Australia is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact David Jackson at 4 Station Street, Thirlmere, NSW 2572, Australia or Email: shellie45@bigpond.com.au.

The Amazing Grace Baptist Church of Stockdale, Texas is in need of a pastor. The church believes in preaching and teaching the doctrines of grace and the Lord's church. Any interested brother my contact Bro. Charles Reddin at (830) 401-0310, if there is no answer please leave a message.

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.

The Liverpool Independent Baptist Church of Liverpool, New York (north of Syracuse) is searching for a sovereign grace pastor. The church believes in the doctrines of grace, the local church, and is pre-trib and pre-mil. Interested brethren should contact Bro. Greg Sigworth at (315) 677-3819.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Galena, OH is in need of a pastor. Any interested candidates possessing the qualifications and traits concerning the office as found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are asked to contact either of the following: Bro. Randy Coffey at (614) 871-2406 or email recoffeypot@aol.com, or Bro. Joe Vass at (614) 846-8699 or email jamijoe@wowway.com.



The Glade Creek Baptist Church, Summersville, WV, is in need of a pastor. This church believes and preaches the doctrines of grace and church truth. Any interested Elder should call Bro. Rodney Perkins at (304) 742-3050 or Bro. Allen Frame at (304) 742-5775.

The Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Marion, IL is in need of a replacement pastor. Elder Raymond T. Ellis is the current pastor, but due to his age, is needing to resign. The church believes and preaches the doctrines of grace and the local church. Any interested Elder may contact Elder Ellis at (618) 983-8697 or Bro. Gary Ratley at (618) 841-0228.

The Twinbrook Hills Baptist Church of Hamilton, OH is prayerfully seeking a pastor. Organized in 1938, the church holds to historic Baptist truths, including the Doctrines of Grace. Please visit the church's website at <http://twinbrook.net> to view the Church Constitution and other items that describe our beliefs and show what the church is doing today. Please contact Bro. Chris Willis at Elohimfirst@gmail.com for more information.



WATERING THE TULIPS

By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama

Losing Our Burden in Jesus

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30).

This world is full of burdens. In fact, oftentimes life itself becomes extremely burdensome simply by the monotony. “Eat – sleep – work” seems to be what life is about sometimes. Add sin to the equation,

and problems arise. Anguish in the soul leads many to the edge of despair. Many seek out drugs, alcohol or other sinful acts to help alleviate some bit of stress – to escape the hustle and bustle of life. Some finally arrive at the point of believing suicide is the only way out. Yes, life is often full of problems because we are all sinners.

And yet, true rest is to be found in this life. Though the natural man has no interest in the things of God (I Cor. 2:14), the promise of rest is still clearly offered in the person of Jesus Christ. Man's inability and lack of desire do not negate the blessed promise of rest in Jesus. Children of God could line up and give testimony after testimony of the times the Lord has given help in times of need. When the world has often supplied the lemons, God has often made lemonade for His own.

In this life, it is impossible to completely avoid trials and tribulations. Those that preach “health and wealth” must have never read that Jesus was **“a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief”** (Isa. 53:3). They must never have studied the lives of the apostles and how 11 of them died as martyrs. None of the early churches enjoyed the “health and wealth” often promoted today. They were real people with real problems. And yet, they found refuge in Christ.

Children of God are not immune to problems. If Jesus had **“sorrows”** and **“griefs,”** certainly we can expect the same. Yet, the way we face these problems can certainly be varied. If we look to ourselves or to this world for help, we will be sorely disappointed. However, there is rest in Jesus and His work. Greater than rest from the problems of this world, in Christ alone can we find rest for a soul wearied by sin. Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6). Trying to seek God any other way will always end in despair and disappointment.

Child of God, rest in Jesus. Rest in His finished work on the cross. Serve Him with zeal because He completed the payment required for your sins. Seek refuge from Him when life throws you curves. Take a moment today to thank God for the rest He has freely given you in His Son.



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