

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

Seven Fools

By Roger Reed
of Mansfield, Ohio



"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise" (Prov. 12:15).

"A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness" (Prov. 12:23).

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Pedal to the Metal; America in the Fast Lane of Reprobation

By Richard H. Heatherly
of Wingo, Kentucky

A year or so ago when the Boulder Colorado High School required students to attend a lecture where they were encouraged to practice having sex with both opposite and same sex partners and to use drugs; raised few eyebrows, and few voices of outrage. The news report played actual tapes of the lecture which used graphic language describing intercourse and drug use: And was approved

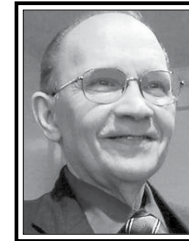


by the school board, school Superintendent, and school Principal. And at the time of the news report, there had not been one parent who voiced any opposition. When the news reporter attempted to question the school officials they arrogantly refused to give any explanation to justify their actions.

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Having Done All

By Ronnie W. Wolfe
of Harrison, Ohio



"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all,

to stand" (Eph. 6:13).

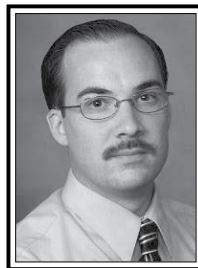
God expects us to do all that we can do for His glory. Commandments are given in

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The KJV: An English Translation of the Inspired Word of God

By Shawn Berry
of Somerset, Kentucky

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16). I would like to begin by stating that in accordance with this passage I believe that all Scripture from Genesis to



Revelation is the inspired Word of God. The Greek word translated **"inspiration of God"** in this passage literally means, God breathed. That is what we call verbal inspiration. As God spoke

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Why A Baptist Preacher Cannot Grant A Divorce

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

There are diverse beliefs among Baptists as to marriage and divorce. This Baptist preacher knows that he could not in a lifetime of two hundred years answer the questions that pertain to these two subjects. He does not claim to have even most of the answers that arise about marriage and divorce, let alone all of them.



Any honest Bible believer will, he thinks, say the same. But let us look, profitably, we hope, at some things concerning marriage and divorce. Divorce was well known among the ancient Israelites. So well known was it that God used divorce as

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All sinners are Satan's slaves.

And like many slaves, they have lost the desire for freedom, and almost the capacity for it. Only a divine power can emancipate minds enslaved by the love of sin.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1).

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

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

Seven Fools

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"The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit. Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour" (Pro. 14:8-9).

I was asked recently by a visitor who was coming to the Mission what my definition of an "idiot" was? I defined an idiot to him as "all liberals," which he rejected! We know that it sounds humorous, but we believe it to be true. So, I really thought I gave a good definition of an idiot to him! But for a clearer definition; the word "fool" in the Bible I would consider to be the same as an idiot. And Psalms 53:1 says the fool says there is no God! Further, an idiot is one that lacks common sense and is contrary to God's Word; that is why I answered "all liberals." They believe in abortions, homosexuality, etc, and they seem to lack common sense as the following definitions for idiot imply.

The dictionary gives one definition; informal, an utterly foolish or senseless person: the dictionary used this as a sentence; "If you think you can wear that outfit to a job interview and get hired, you're an idiot!"

The dictionary gives another definition of a fool as a silly or stupid person; a person who lacks judgment or sense; what I would call a liberal. A third definition is a weak-minded or idiotic person.

My wife approached me a while back about my use of the word "idiot" from the pulpit and thought that it did not sound appropriate coming from a Baptist preacher. I pleaded my case to her without much success until one day we were watching Fox News and Nancy Pelosi was

on there, ranting and raving about something, and I turned to my wife and asked her to give me one word that described Nancy Pelosi and she looked back at me with this blank look, and I said, how about "idiot?" I have recently heard my wife, while watching the News, use the word idiot! And if I am not mistaken, she used the same word to describe the way someone was driving down the highway! Now I grant you it sounds like a pretty harsh word and I do not want the reader to think we go around calling everyone an idiot, but if the word fits, I do not know what to tell you!

A fool is a man whose stupidity is proven by his actions or words, again, what I would call a "liberal."

Now let us take a look at the Biblical aspect of fools, particularly these "seven fools."

The first fool is "The Atheistical Fool." This fool says in his heart, **"There is no God"** (Ps. 14:1). What he is really saying is he wishes there was none, and so ventures to think and say there is **"no God."** He is a fool for saying so, but he does not know. He has not searched every corner of the universe to see.

The atheist is basically a liar. He has to believe in God in order to try so hard to disprove that God does not exist. If he truly believes there is no God, than why does he try so hard to prove He does not? If God does not exist, then He does not exist, why not just let it go at that? It is because He does exist and therefore efforts are made by the atheist to prove otherwise!

The second fool is "The Rationalistic Fool" (I Cor. 15:35-36). This fool doubts the resurrection and denies all miracles, because he knows

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WATERING THE TULIPS



By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama



Walking In Him

“And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good” (Deut. 10:12-13)?

Man wants rules. It is our nature. We want everything to be black and white. From a spiritual standpoint, we just want to know what we can do to be acceptable to God. This is the natural inclination of a depraved heart. Israel desired a law and God gave them one. The Law was perfect and holy just like its Giver. Nonetheless, it was given to a fallen, depraved people who could not keep it even if they wanted to...and they did not want to.

What was Israel's real problem? It is the same problem we often find ourselves in. Israel got so caught up in the “letter of the Law” that they completely missed the “Spirit of the Law.” In other words, Israel tried to find favor in the Law alone without any true desire to serve God. Their supposed adherence to the Law was for selfish reasons (i.e. salvation). They had no desire to

glorify God for they did not love Him.

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom” (Ps. 111:10). But this is a healthy fear. We are not to be scared of God. There is a vast difference. Children should have a reverential, healthy fear of their father. But they should not be scared of him. Such is our relationship to our Heavenly Father. In this sense, Israel was instructed to **“fear the Lord thy God.”**

A healthy fear of God will cause us to seek His will in our lives. God's revealed will today is the Bible. Nothing is to be added to that. Nothing needs to be added to that; it is complete! **“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, throughly furnished unto all good works” (II Tim. 3:16-17).** God's people will seek His revealed will in the Word of God if they have a healthy fear of the Lord.

The key to this passage, however, is that we are to **“love Him.”** Jesus said, **“If God were your Father, ye would love me” (John 8:42).** Saved people love Jesus. The fact that these did not love Him was proof that they were not saved. It is to those that **“love God”** that **“all things work together for good” (Rom. 8:28).** Again, when God draws a person to Christ as the Spirit empowers the Gospel, people have a newfound love for Him and His salvation through His Son. This is an unnatural love. It is supernatural!

Dear reader, do you love God? Do you love God's gift to mankind? Do you love Jesus and His cross? Do you desire to glorify Him daily because you love

Him? Israel sought to serve God without truly loving Him. Are you making the same mistake?



Seven Fools

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neither the Scriptures, nor the power of God. An American skeptic was overcome and conquered by these two words, **“Thou fool.”** The rest of the verse reads, **“that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die.”** The weakness of man's reason to grasp cannot make the Word of God of none effect.

Just because a person can not reason it out, does not mean that it is not true. I can not reason it out that God loved me and chose me before the foundation of the world, but the fact remains that He did, **“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” (Eph. 1:4).**

The third fool is “The Shameless Fool.” This fool **“makes a mock at sin” (Prov. 14:9).** A miner in Tasmania was a thoughtless and profane man. A very common expression of his was, “God curse my eyes.” He had his eyes blown out of his head by an explosion. Sin is the abominable thing which God hates, and for which Christ shed His Blood, yet fools make a mock at it.

That is what the “liberal” is doing today. Abortions and homosexuality (sodomy) are sin, they are an affront to God, an abomination to Him, and they make a mockery of that sin.

The fourth fool is “The Thoughtless Fool.” **“And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish**

man, which built his house upon the sand” (Matt. 7:26). He goes on building the house of all his hopes for the future on the sand. So foolish is he that he expects to save himself by his own works, apart from that only foundation laid by God, “The Rock” Christ Jesus.

The hymn we sing, “On Christ the solid Rock I stand, all else is sinking sand,” the hymn writer had it right, anything other than Jesus Christ is a waste of time and effort. Without Christ there is NO hope, NONE! He is the Way, the Truth and the Light! God help the blind to see!

The fifth fool is “The Industrious Fool.” **“But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided” (Luke 12:20).** This man is not a skeptic; he does not make a mock at sin, he is thoughtful, active, and a careful business man. But earthly goods are all that he is concerned about. He did well for himself, and men would praise him, but he was a fool in the sight of God, who weighs human lives in the balance of eternity.

To trust in the abundance of riches and make not God your strength is supreme folly. What is our present life? It is but a vapor. Therefore, **“lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matt. 6:20).** **“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33).**

The sixth fool is “The Self-Confident Fool” (Rom. 1:12-22). This man knows there is a God, but glorifies Him not as God. Neither is he thankful, but becomes vain in his imaginations, and professing himself to be wise he becomes a fool. Oh, the folly

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Seven Fools

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of believing in God and honoring Him not as God, following the vain thoughts of his own foolish heart instead of the thoughts of God. Substituting his own imaginations for the revealed will of God, he sees the light but loves the darkness better.

Many of the doctrinal disagreements are with those who profess to be Christians but do not possess Christ. Many are the teachers and professors of our day. Without the Holy Spirit's influence they will never understand. To put it another way, if they are not **"born again"** they will never come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and lack all spiritual understanding.

Now for the seventh fool, the best fool of all, and that is "The Christian Fool." **"We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised"** (I Cor. 4:10). It is infinitely better to be a fool in the eyes of Christ-less men, and be wise in the sight of God, than be a fool in the sight of God and wise in the eyes of sin-blinded men. The wisdom of Christ is far above the highest wisdom of men as the folly of the fool is below it.

After the learned Saul was converted he was called a **"babbling"** (Acts 17:18). Festus called him **"mad"** (Acts 26:24). **"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"** (I Cor. 2:14). For the Christian fool there is prepared a great and blessed asylum (John 14:2).

Dear reader, the word **"fool"** appears in the Bible 73 times.

What kind of "fool" do you want to be? What kind of "fool" do you want to be remembered as? And if a man would call me an idiot for believing in God and the Lord Jesus Christ, than I may be an idiot in the eyes of the world, but not in the eyes of God! God Bless!



Pedal to the Metal

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The old expression "Pedal to the Metal" seems to describe this mad rush to embrace total immorality. Some may ask, how, can this happen in America? The answer lies in the direction in which the education system has been going in the last fifty years or so; Our education used to be based upon an acceptance of Ethical Theism: that is, a belief that right and wrong are absolute, unchanging, and decided (and communicated to men and women) by God in His Word, the Holy Bible. However, that is no longer true in many educational systems, and in the majority of the material used in all of our nation's schools. Most educational material in latter years has been greatly influenced by Secular Progressive promoters using Modernism, Multiculturalism, and Political correctness; which have now created a society which thinks in the vein of Postmodernism and Universalism. And when you closely examine a definition of these words, it quickly becomes apparent how our society today can find a reason for defending almost any behavior or teaching except that which demands behavior controlled by an absolute truth based upon the Bible the Word of God.

A brief definition of Modernism is that man does not need revelation from God to know truth; that man can by his own

rationality through his senses know truth; And that any truth which cannot be observed and experienced - such as Spiritual or Moral truth - is relative (that is different from person to person:) In other words every person decides truth based upon their own concept: There is no absolute revelation of truth such as the Bible. Now look at the definition of another word we hear used a lot today "Multiculturalism" meaning basically that each culture sets its own standard of truth and that no one view of truth is absolute: Here again is seen the teaching that there is no universal and final standard of truth such as the Bible.

These views have created a society, through higher education, that accepts Postmodernism, and universalism as the standard of truth. Postmodernism is (the view that) truth does not exist in any absolute sense but is created rather than discovered; Reason and rationality to them is prejudicial biases because truth whether in education or religion is only for each culture as they see it. Therefore they see any attempt by any one to convey truth to another culture as a power play seeking to dominate other cultures. "Universalism" is a view of religion that says (positively) all world views can be valid ways of salvation and (negative) exclusives are wrong.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said in John 3:19-21 **"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved, But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."**

And Psalms 119:105 says, **"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."** John 17:17 reads, **"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."**

If one looks honestly at the moral direction this generation is going, I think Romans 1:25-28 sums up the problem. It reads, **"who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lusts one toward another; men with men... And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."**

So once again we plead with the people of America to hear God's warning in Psalms 9:17, **"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."**

However, I am not overly worried or perplexed because I know our heavenly Father is in charge and will cause all things to turn out righteous and for His glory. Romans 8:28 says, **"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."** I just read the last chapter of His blessed Book and everything is all right in my Father's house where His children will spend eternity. So, if you know Jesus Christ as your savior, rejoice and look up. **"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh"** (James 5:8).





From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Furnace of Affliction

"Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction" (Isa. 48:10).

The Bible has much to say about the afflictions of God's people. Psalm 34:19 declares: **"Many are the afflictions of the righteous."** It is sometimes necessary for God to put His people in the furnace of affliction. This act flows from both the justice and compassion of God. He does this to try and to prove His people. This was true of Israel of old (Deut. 4:20), and it is equally true of the New Testament believer.

In the time of the Old Testament a "furnace" was a fireplace for melting and refining silver and gold (Prov. 17:3; 27:21). The word is used figuratively in the Scriptures. It is an emblem of cruel bondage (Deut. 4:20; I Kings 8:51; Isa. 11:4), or severe and grievous afflictions (Ezek. 22:18-22; Isa. 32:9). In my text it would seem to have the latter meaning.

THE FURNACE IS AFFLICTIVE

Many agents are used by God in working out His sovereign purposes. He may use men, things, and circumstances. This is all hinted at in the action of fire in a furnace. A furnace with a fire in it causes suffering and separation. Fire finds out what is worthless; it cleanses. Now I want to list some of the forms these afflictions take.

First, God may send us a scantiness of earthly things: **"And I also have given you cleanness**

of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD" (Amos 4:6). We may not have enough food to dirty our teeth. The Lord controls both nature and worldly circumstances. He has many ways of taking away our temporal goods. Though we may work hard every work day and make much money, God can cause it to not go very far. **"Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes"** (Hag. 1:6).

Second, there can be affliction in our body: **"My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh"** (Ps. 38:5-7). It is a small matter for the great Proprietor and Manager of the furnace of affliction to make the body burn with fever or waste it by disease.

Third, this affliction may take the form of bereavements: **"And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her"** (Gen. 23:2). Our friends and relatives get sick and die.

Many of us have been put in this furnace of affliction. Friends and relatives are removed by death, lest we trust too much in them instead of the Lord.

Fourth, the Lord sends domestic trials: **"And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah"** (Gen. 26:34-35). Sometimes our child will make a bad choice of a mate for life. Often times even small children in the home mock their father and despise their mother (Prov. 30:17). The actions of our children can break our hearts, put gray hairs in our heads, and hasten us to the grave.

Millions of God's elect have been in this furnace of affliction. Adam first experienced it when he sinned in Eden. Moses suffered afflictions with the people of God. David was persecuted by his blood-thirsty enemies. Job lost his possessions, children, and health. Jeremiah and Isaiah were cruelly treated. Daniel was put in the lions' den. Paul and Silas were put in prison. Even our Lord was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

THIS FURNACE IS DIVINELY APPOINTED

Afflictions are not the result of chance or blind fate. They arise not out of the dust. They are not to be traced to secondary causes. They are not merely the work of our enemies. Affliction comes from the moral government of God. They are the wise and gracious arrangement of His providence. **"That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto"** (I Thess. 3:3). **"Hear ye the rod, and who**

hath appointed it" (Micah 6:9).

The same God who sends the sunshine and the rain also sends His people into the furnace of affliction. **"The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up"** (I Sam. 2:6-7). In Isaiah 45:7 Jehovah declares: **"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things."**

The wise man sees the hand of God in affliction as well as in affluency. Every event is either of His appointment, or it has His all-wise permission. God works all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11), and so all things work together for good to them that love God (Rom. 8:28). **"He taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou? He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked"** (Job 9:12, 22).

God's afflictive providence is the working out of His sovereign will. Often we see God's hand in great things, but not in little things. We see His hand in good things, but not in evil things. **"Behold, this evil is of the LORD"** (II Kings 6:33). Job asked his wife: **"What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"** (Job 2:10). **"Shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?"** (Amos 3:6). **"For the inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good: but evil came down from the LORD unto the gate of Jerusalem"** (Micah 1:12). These verses do not teach that God is the author of sin. Rather they teach that when God sends us afflictions they seem evil unto us.

When grace enables us to see

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The Furnace of

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the hand of God in all events, we can bear these without murmuring or complaining. Job lost his family, his wealth, and his good health, yet he consoled himself: **"For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him"** (Job 23:14). David suffered much from his enemies and his family, yet he was happy to say: **"My times are in thy hand"** (Ps. 31:15). Still again hear him: **"I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it"** (Ps. 39:9). When Eli was told his family tree would be cut off, he said to young Samuel: **"It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good"** (I Sam. 3:18). When Hezekiah was told by the Prophet Isaiah that his sons would be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon, he said: **"Good is the word of the LORD which thou has spoken"** (Isa. 39:8).

How wonderful to know that a God of infinite love and wisdom has arranged all things which come to pass in this world. When we find ourselves in a very dark chapter of the book of Divine Providence, we must fall upon the words of our Lord: **"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shall know hereafter"** (John 13:7).

THIS FURNACE IS NOT VINDICTIVE, BUT GRACIOUS

The chastisement of God is always less than we deserve: **"He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities"** (Ps. 103:10). If God dealt with us as our sins deserved, we would be consigned to the lowest Hell. But because of His mercy and grace we never suffer as we deserve

to suffer. **"But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath"** (Ps. 78:38). **"And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this"** (Ezra 9:13).

Our sins are many: **"For in many things we offend all"** (Jas. 3:2). Nevertheless, God's judgments are few: **"For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men"** (Lam. 3:33). The afflictions He sends because of our sins are **"light affliction"** (II Cor. 4:17). They are of short duration: **"For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning"** (Ps. 30:5). The Lord told the Israelites: **"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"** (Isa. 54:7-8).

THE FURNACE IS FOR OUR EVERLASTING GOOD

There can be no caprice, nor unwise anger in God toward His peculiar people. When He sends upon us afflictions they are designed for our spiritual and everlasting good. They are corrective, not destructive. When we are cold and indifferent to His cause He will permit persecutions and reproaches to befall us. But this is not the same way God punishes the wicked for their sins. The wicked are punished in wrath; the righteous are chastened in love. The wicked is punished for

the good of society; the righteous for his individual good: **"When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold"** (Job 23:10; cf. Deut. 8:15-16).

Afflictions exhibit the faithfulness of God: **"I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me"** (Ps. 119:75). God always justly and wisely chastens us. It is the faithfulness of God to His covenant which brings the elect under the rod. **"If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips"** (Ps. 89:31-34; cf. Ezek. 20:37). These chastisements are blessings in disguise; they are veiled mercies.

When sore afflictions come upon us we have the greatest evidence that we are loved with an everlasting love: **"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent"** (Rev. 3:19). **"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"** (Heb. 12:6-7). None but the sons and daughters of God in the family are corrected. To live without chastisement is a sad sign of alienation from God. Our heavenly Father chastens us to prevent our final condemnation: **"But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world"** (I Cor. 11:32).

THE FURNACE IS

PROPORTIONATE

As a furnace is prepared for refining gold (Prov. 17:3), so afflictions are appointed for the saints, who are compared to fine gold (Lam. 4:2). Let us see here the high value that God places upon His people. Being chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, they are His precious gold. As His gold they get tarnished by the world and sin, and they must be subjected to the refining process. The power of His glory and grace must be seen in them. Hence Jehovah seeks their spiritual improvement: **"And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin"** (Isa. 1:25).

The Lord does not treat Israel in the severe manner in which gold or silver is treated by the refiner: **"Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver. . ."** (Isa. 48:10). The Great Refiner knows His metal; He knows what each one can bear. He never suffers us to be tested above that we are able to bear. Sometimes He pours water on the fire if it gets too hot. He never goes beyond our strength. Neither does He turn the furnace up to the same temperature for all alike. He proportionates the temperature to the strength of the bearer, allotting a greater heat to the strongest, and a less to the weakest. **"I will correct thee in measure"** (Jer. 30:11). God will not over afflict.

The goldsmith keeps the furnace burning with the gold in it until all the dross has been removed, and he can see his face in the pure gold. Even so does our heavenly Father. Let us be cheerful and hopeful when we are in the furnace, knowing He seeks only to see His pure image clearly in us. We are in the furnace of affliction

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"for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness" (Heb. 12:10).

An all-wise God regulates the heat of the furnace according to the needs of His people. **"And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness"** (Mal. 3:3). Some of us need more heat than others, so He quickens the fire when needed. Micah said: **"I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him..."** (Micah 7:9). There are other times that He lowers the temperature, according to His Divine inspection. The prophet Jeremiah said: **"O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing"** (Jer. 10:24).

THE TENDENCY OF THE FURNACE IS BENEFICIAL

Matthew Henry gives this beautiful exposition of my text: "I have made thee a choice one by the good which the furnace has done thee." The design of God in choosing us to suffer in the furnace of affliction was for our everlasting good and His glory. Regenerating grace implants in us the seeds of immortality, which require cultivation in order to bring about maturity. The furnace is designed to develop these principles and to fit us for higher enjoyment.

First, the furnace of affliction is designed to prevent us from going astray: **"Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word. . . . It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes"** (Ps. 119:67, 71). By our natural

corruption we are ready to wander in the pathway of sin and go astray after worldly vanities. Hence the Lord makes affliction to serve us as an electric fence and a thorny hedge to keep us on the right course. Afflictions amend us and strengthen us to keep God's statutes.

Second, they wean us from the evil world: **"For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place"** (Ps. 66:10-12). When Egypt became an iron furnace the Israelites became weary of it. The prodigal never thought of his father until he experienced famine. The Lord makes this world a grief so it may not become our god. It is to be our purgatory that may never make it our paradise.

Third, to test our religious profession: **"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold"** (Job 23:10). We profess to be gold for God's treasury, yet there is dross in us. We claim to be grain fit for the garner of heavenly glory, yet there seems to be more chaff than wheat in us. Therefore the Lord casts us into the furnace of affliction that we may be tried and purified. The dross must be severed and separated from us. We must be winnowed with the strong wind of affliction that the chaff may be blown away and the pure grain remain.

We profess to be soldiers in the army of the King of kings. We claim to fight under the banner of the Lord of hosts. Therefore the Lord suffers us to be attacked by Satan and assaulted by the world with afflictions and persecutions to try us and to find out if we are traitors. Cowards will yield early in the fight. Real soldiers will stand and fight to the death, but

a traitor will join with the enemy. **"But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended"** (Matt. 13:20-21). **"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"** (II Tim. 2:3).

Fourth, the furnace of affliction brings about growth in Christian graces: **"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope"** (Rom. 5:3-4). Our heavenly Father longs to see His children grow up spiritually. To bring this about He uses the instrumentality of afflictions. In these we learn patience and we are caused to hope in God. The Lord buffets and afflicts us with severe trials to give occasion to exercise these graces which otherwise would die dormant with us.

Fifth, the great Refiner aims to drive us to prayer: **"LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them"** (Isa. 26:16). **"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray"** (Jas. 5:13). The furnace is necessary to stir up prayer in us. In peace and prosperity we seldom recognize our need of Divine help. Afflictions bring us to God and show our need of dependence upon Him. In suffering, those who formerly sought God slowly will seek Him early. **"In their affliction they will seek me early"** (Hos. 5:15).

Sixth, afflictions prepare us for greater usefulness and fruitfulness: **" . . . and every branch that beareth fruit, he**



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purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:2). The wise farmer prunes his fruit trees in the winter so that they may produce more fruit in the summer. Superfluous branches and suckers which steal the sap must be removed. Creature comforts are often to the soul what suckers are to the tree. Therefore the great Farmer takes these off that the tree of the Lord may produce much fruit. God will prune His people, but not hew them down. The right hand of His mercy knows what the left hand of His severity is doing.

CONCLUSION

1. Do not think the life of a Christian is easy. It is not a flowery bed of ease. During our life on earth we all must spend some time in the furnace of afflictions. But like the three Hebrews in the furnace in Babylon, God is always with us in all these sufferings. **"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee"** (Isa. 43:2).

2. By placing His people in the furnace of affliction He is educating us for crowns and thrones in His coming kingdom. At present the Lord is fashioning the inward spiritual life for the world to come. The oppression, the piercings, the anguish, the disappointments, and all events are but the preparation for the position we shall occupy in the millennial age to come.

3. As Israel did not understand election till they were in Egypt, even so today we come to see ours in the furnace of afflictions. When

convicted by the Holy Spirit the sorrows of death compass us and the pains of Hell get hold upon us, then we come to see distinguishing grace and everlasting love. In soul trouble we come to understand the text: **"I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction."**

4. There is in this world a furnace of afflictions for God's elect. Then in the world to come there is another furnace of literal, physical fire that is heated for the ungodly after the judgment. **"The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth"** (Matt. 13:41-42). Oh, sinner, flee the wrath to come!



Having Done All

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Scripture that attest the fact that believers are to be busy about the Father's business. Sometimes this business is difficult; and when some believers see that it is difficult, they hesitate, draw back, and resist the incumbent command to, **"go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"** (Matt. 28:19).

This hesitation is from the flesh, not from the Spirit, **"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak"** (Matt. 26:41).

Baptists are great debtors to God and creditors to His creatures, **"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh"** (Rom. 8:12). We owe a great debt to the world to give the Gospel to it, to consistently

and continually proclaim the very Gospel that saved our own souls. Daily we are to be prepared to deliver a scriptural gospel to those who are lost in sin, to challenge unbelievers to faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, and to lead believers to a Scriptural church for that communion that only a local church can bring to a true believer.

This is not a game; it is a battle. The whole world is plodding a road that is opposed to God and Christ, the Bible, and the Gospel. It is not in our hand to turn men from their sins to Christ: we only have the message of the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16).

There is only so much that we can do, but we must do it. We must do everything according to our ability: **"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen"** (I Pet. 4:11).

Also, as the text explains, we are to take unto ourselves the whole armor of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day (Eph. 6:13). We are both to "withstand" and to "stand." To "withstand" means to oppose or to stand against something. In Ephesians 6:11 Paul tells us that we are to **"stand against the wiles of the devil."** In order to "make a stand" we are to **"stand against"** the devil and all of his tricks, his confusion, and his temptations.

But we are also to stand, or "make a stand," which is the meaning of the word **"stand"** in Ephesians 6:13. In making a stand, we are to firmly set our feet in a place, a position. That means that we cannot preach a polluted gospel,

another gospel, another Jesus, or another spirit. We must **"study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"** (II Tim. 2:15). We must spend much time in the Scriptures to prepare our minds and hearts to the work ahead of us. The Gospel is the power, but we are the messengers, the ambassadors for Christ (II Cor. 5:20).

Thus, the work is ahead; and it does not matter how little we worked or how many failures we have had behind us, we must **"press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"** (Phil. 3:14). The road behind us may be a muddy one, a wasted one, or a disappointing one; but the road ahead need not be.

Let us take the whole armor of God, every Scripture that we can carry with us, every true doctrinal position that we can comprehend, every intention to share our knowledge of God and Christ to others, and our faith in Christ as our Great Leader, and let us plow the field, which is the world, to every creature, and may our hands be pure of the blood of all men (Acts 20:26).

Then, when all the Gospel that we can give has been given, every Scripture that we can use has been used, every effort to distribute the Gospel has been put forth, and every ounce of our strength has been spent to preach the Gospel, whether men believe, or whether they shun and disdain the Gospel, there we may stand.

We may still stand in our doctrinal position. We may stand in our work done in the name of Jesus Christ. We may stand with our foot on the neck of Satan, for in the spreading of the Gospel he

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Having Done All

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has been defeated.

We need not be discouraged; we need not be dismayed. God works all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11). It is His work to do; it is not ours. It is His glory that we seek, not ours. So, let us resign to His will in our lives, be good ambassadors for Christ; and, when it is all said and done, let us stand. To surrender is human; to stand victorious is the grace of God. **"Having done all, to stand,"** let us stand in faith!



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Salt and Light The Christian's Calling

By Chad Johnson
of Auburn, Kentucky

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matt. 5:13-14).

I want to look at two things that saved people are told to be in this world. First, I want to look at salt. Salt is a very valuable and needed commodity. We need salt for healthy bodies as well as to flavor and preserve food. Before refrigeration, salt was used to can vegetables and preserve meat from spoil. Salt's main purpose is

to preserve.

Since the fall of man in the garden of Eden, the whole creation has been cursed and is spiritually rotten. The only thing in this world not rotten by sin is the Holy Spirit and the new nature that is in every blood-bought saint. That is why we are to be the salt of the earth. We are salt by our testimony and our walk with God before men. As we stand boldly for the truth of God's Word we are preserving the earth. The only thing that is holding back total judgment from God is the salt.

At the rapture the salt will be removed and nothing will preserve the earth then. Our verse also says that salt can lose its savor or flavor. Salt that has no savor cannot be used as a preservative. It is useless. Saved people lose their savor when they conform to the world and get so much like the world that you cannot tell them from the world. We all must fight daily the attack on our minds not to get like the world. The verse also asked the question (**"wherewith shall it be salted?"**). The only people who have the ability to be Biblical salt are saved people. No one else can be salt for us. The best this world's system can produce is far from God's standards.

Religious people are not salt. You can have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. Just take a look at the miserable failure of our anti-God social programs in our country. They have helped little and cost much. Our nation now has a humanist world view instead of a Biblical worldview.

We are also the light of the world. The whole world lies in darkness and the only ray of light is the elect of God. Oh, God help us to shine brighter as it gets darker and darker.



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an analogy as to His dealing with the northern ten tribes and as a warning to the southern two tribes. Jeremiah records God's Words regarding this: **"And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also"** (Jer. 3:8). One of the sins of ancient Israel that related to marriage was that Jewish men were putting away their wives without giving them a bill of divorcement which would allow them to remarry. God remedied that by commanding that a woman thus sent put away should receive proof that she was no longer married. This is clear from Deuteronomy 24:1 where the following words are found: **"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house."** In an exchange of words with the Pharisees, the Lord Jesus dealt somewhat with the complicated matter of marriage and divorce. **"They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth**

commit adultery" (Matt. 19:7-9).

Anciently the act of marriage was a simple matter. Perhaps it can best be understood if we remember first that most often families were involved in selecting marriage partners for their children. This is illustrated in the story of Samson. In Judges 14:2 we read, **"And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife."** Samson's motive in all this is beside our point. The custom of Israel was that marriages were civil contracts between willing couples with families making the agreements. Earlier in those long ago days we read about Isaac lacking a bride and the story of Abraham sending his steward to obtain a wife for him. About Isaac's and Rebekah's wedding we read these words: **"And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death"** (Gen. 24:67). One commentary put it well: "And Isaac brought her into his mother's tent — thus establishing her at once in the rights and honors of a wife before he had seen her features. Disappointments often take place, but when Isaac saw his wife, 'he loved her,'" (ad loc, Jamieson, Fausett & Brown). This is, by the way, the first mention in the Bible of affection between a man and a woman. And it took place after they were married. In this marriage we see the public acceptance of Rebekah by Isaac, the willingness not only of the young woman, but also of both her family and that of Isaac, and the intent of the couple to be man

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and wife – all publicly known – all this, along with the consummation of the marriage, constituted their wedding. Everyone knew this was not a “one night stand” nor a mere concubinage. Rebekah was recognized publicly to be the wife of Isaac. There was no “man of God” to solemnize the wedding, no license, no banns published – just a contract – a verbal agreement stated – between the couple’s families and a willingness on the part of the couple.

We know from the life of Christ that He attended at least one wedding while here upon earth. The wedding He attended was not a ceremony performed by a priest or rabbi for that was unknown. As was the custom then, no doubt the couple had been “espoused” by their parents sometime before – perhaps from childhood. The word “espouse” does not mean engaged. It means married. The couple was married by agreement of the families – a verbal contract. You will remember that this was the case with Joseph and Mary. They were espoused – married – not engaged. The fact that they were already married is proved in that when Mary was found to be with child, Joseph “**was minded to put her away privily**” (Matt. 1:19). He did not think to break his engagement to Mary for no such thing as engagement existed in those days. Joseph thought to divorce Mary – privately out of kindness to her, no doubt. In the wedding that Jesus attended there had been, no doubt, a public procession in which the groom took his bride from her home to the place of the wedding feast. Perhaps the Lord took part in this procession: we are not told. Very likely the bride had young

women friends to accompany her as her maids in this procession. Everyone in their neighborhood knew of the intent of the couple and their families. The feast with its many invited guests served as witnesses to the union of these two people in marriage. With the consummation of the wedding all was completed. Jewish men could take additional wives and could put away their wives by law, but the Lord Jesus said “**but from the beginning it was not so.**” Malachi argues for once-for-all marriages between one man and one woman by saying, “**And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth**” (Mal. 2:15). God could have made more than one woman for Adam, Malachi says, but because He wanted godliness in the offspring, God only made one woman for one man.

It seems to have been the Romans who introduced religion and ceremonies into marriages in a big way. They often offered sacrifices, an iron ring was usually given by the groom to the bride, both the fathers’ approvals were necessary and marriages were often arranged for financial gain, especially among the more affluent classes. With the Romans, the wedding feast was usually held the day after the couple had consummated the marriage. It is easy to see how that pagan Rome influenced the Catholics and brought about the “sacrament of marriage,” as enforced by that Popish religious organization. However, nothing about marriage ceremonies being performed by either the Lord’s preachers or the Lord’s congregations is found in the New Testament. Historically,

Baptists of bygone days did not seek out their preachers to perform marriage ceremonies. Having neither Divine nor civil authority to perform marriages, Baptist preachers were not involved in weddings.

Our title raises this question: ‘Why Cannot A Baptist Preacher Grant a Divorce?’ Why, because the government will not allow him to do so, of course – unless, of course, he is a divorce judge. This ought to prove once and for all to every reader that marriages are civil unions regulated by the state. Until the fairly recent attainment of “respectability,” (since colonial days in North America) Baptists were, like the apostles, considered “**the offscouring of all things**” (I Cor. 4:13). That being the case, Baptist preachers were not recognized by the established governments or churches. It was then the domain of priestcraft to unite “church and state” and “solemnize” the marriages of those given permission to marry by the government. Having no mandate in the Scriptures to conduct marriage ceremonies, Baptists were not bothered with the matter back then. Historically, when Baptists were forbidden to preach or to baptize, they continued the practices “underground” because they were commanded by God to do so. But in those bygone days of persecution, Baptists never went against civil governments by performing marriages.

Were all those old-time Baptists and anabaptists married in God’s eyes – without a true preacher officiating in a non-existing Baptist meeting house? Were people who were married by state-church ceremonies married “in God’s eyes?” If a Catholic couple are married by a priest, are they “married in God’s eyes?” Were slaves married in God’s eyes who

were instructed by their masters to marry by “jumping over the broomstick?” Were “Gypsies” married by doing the same thing in Great Britain? Were American pioneers “married in God’s eyes” when they promised fidelity to each other and cohabited publicly on that basis? Often in those frontier situations there were no governments to issue licenses and no preachers to marry them. If they solemnly promised each other to live as husband and wife and were recognized as married by their relatives and neighbors in the western wilderness were they “married in God’s eyes?” And were those pagans whose intent was to live together as husband and wife “married in God’s eyes?” Are Buddhists, Hindus, and Mormons “married in God’s eyes” when they observe their customs? Were Isaac and Rebekah and the couple whose wedding feast was attended by our Lord – were those marriages real and genuine and were those marriages recognized by God?

It is priestcraft pure and simple to think that a religious ceremony is required in order for a couple to be married. Technically it is called sacerdotalism: the idea that a special class or religious order is required to officiate at a ceremony of any kind. Marriage is in modern societies a civil matter, regulated by civil governments. Must there be a civil government in place in order for people to get married? There was no organized, elected or appointed civil government in the days of Adam and Eve or Isaac and Rebekah. Were they married or not? There is no instruction or authorization or even a hint that God’s preachers are to perform marriages. Neither is there any warrant or hint that Baptist folk ought to be married in Baptist

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meeting houses. Immediately someone will ask, "Are these things then prohibited?" Legally and logically they are. "Expressio unius est exclusio alterius" means "the specification of one thing is the exclusion of a different thing." That is a legal principle. For instance: if a loan contract requires monthly payments, the lender cannot suddenly demand two payments each month. The contract does not specifically state that they cannot demand two per month, but the specification of one payment per month excludes them demanding two. It is also a logical conclusion. Did God specify what His preachers and His congregations were to concern themselves with? Did He tell us what He wanted done? Did Christ leave His Baptist congregations with a commission to preach the gospel, baptize converts and teach them to obey the commandments of Christ? Are these things specific? If so their very nature prohibits preachers and congregations from performing either marriages or divorce ceremonies. The Catholic Church claims the exclusive right to marry her members and the right to annul marriages through their Diocesan Tribunals. Baptists have never dared, thus far, to claim the right of annulment, but why not? If it is right for Baptist preachers to perform marriages, then they or their churches ought to have power to annul marriages too, shouldn't they? Do the things specified by Christ in His commission leave room for preachers and congregations to engage in entertaining goats? Or bringing Popish traditions and ideas into the thinking and practice of Baptists? Or bringing

in the Mormon and pagan ideas of polygamous marriages? Can an apostate preacher ordained by a false church that preaches a false gospel marry a couple "in God's eyes?" If not, then all who were not married by the "right kind" of Baptist preachers are living in sin – is that what you believe? Should Baptists require their converts who were not married by Baptist preachers to be remarried? Can a couple be "more married" by having been married by a Baptist preacher in a Baptist meeting house than any other marriage recognized by the civil government under which they live?

We have asked a lot of foolish questions, some will say, and we grant it. But our point is to show that many marriage customs which differ from today's do not make a couple unmarried. After God created Eve, He **"...brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."** (Gen. 2:22-23). God did nothing more than create a help meet for Adam and bring her to him. God did not say "Do you take this woman to be your lawfully wedded wife?" nor did He ask a similar question of Eve. Adam expressed his intent publicly: angels, demons, Satan and God heard him if they were listening. No prayers were prayed. Nobody sang. No blessings were pronounced. No rings were exchanged. Eve did not wear a white dress. No vows were spoken. The pagan custom of throwing rice on the newly married couple did not take place. But the intentions of Adam and Eve were to live together as husband and wife and this was publicly stated. And so they became "one flesh." With the

consummation of the marriage they were joined in wedlock. The word wedlock, by the way, comes "from the Middle English *wedlok*, from Old English *wedlāc*, marriage bond, from *wedd* pledge + *-lāc*, suffix denoting activity." Oh, it was anciently the activity of making a pledge that made the marriage binding – according to Merriam Webster's online definition.

So then, in summation, we think, along with John Gill and others, that Baptist preachers have no business being in the marrying business. Marriage is a civil matter governed by civil laws. Couples are not "more married" by being in a ceremony in a Baptist meeting house than if at the city hall, registry office, office of a justice of the peace or a "wedding chapel" in Las Vegas. Man-made wedding ceremonies do not and cannot bring God into a marriage any more than the man-made sprinkling of infants can bring God into the heart of the unbelieving infant. Doing what God has not commanded a Baptist preacher to do cannot be viewed as obedience to God! Essentially, we think three things are required for a marriage to be valid: first, the intent of the man and woman; second, the public nature of the joining together of the man and woman; and third, compliance with whatever civil requirements exist as legislated by the government under which the man and woman live.

Baptist preachers cannot grant a divorce unless they are also a civil judge. Why? Because the civil government did not give them that authority. Baptist preachers cannot marry people in obedience to God because He never instructed them to do so. Only if given that right and authority by a civil government

can Baptist preachers become servants of the government and act upon the permission (license) given by the government for a couple to marry. And so, to clarify the matter, we ask one more question: whose servant does a Baptist preacher become when he solemnizes a marriage? We think it obvious: he is doing what the state requires. Paul reasoned thus in Romans 6:16: **"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey...."** When any preacher obeys the state in performing marriages as prescribed by that government he is in that sense and at that time a servant of the state. He cannot truthfully say in a marriage ceremony, "by the power vested in me by God" or "by the power vested in me by the Bible." He can only say, "by the power vested in me by the state of Texas, or Michigan or Kentucky, etc." He cannot be said to be a servant of Christ in that matter for Christ neither authorized him to do such a thing, nor told him how to do it. Selah.



The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Could you briefly explain Ephesians 2:10? - Mississippi

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"Forwearehisworkmanship,..."

The **"we"** here in this verse are those that have been quickened. They have been quickened by the Holy Spirit of God in concert with Jesus' blood sacrifice and the resurrection. God, being the Redeemer and Master of all things in the universe, elected, saved, and preserved a people to Himself for His glory and honor.

"Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, ..." The work of creation, redemption, and the resurrection is secured by the Son of God for all time thru His love for those God has given Him to be an advocate for. The good works are those that please God, not man's flesh. Good works are those that Jesus preached about in Matthew 5-7, and what the Apostles preached and wrote about that is recorded in the New Testament concerning our conversation in this world.

"Which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them..." Those who are quickened by God are only able to perform the good works, that have been afore prepared by God for us to walk in, because of God. **"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure"** (Phil. 2:13) No where does it ever say, to His displeasure, the sin we commit is us, because

of our disobedience.

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Ephesians 2:10 states: **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."** To understand this verse it is important to establish who Paul is referring to. He includes himself among the number who are God's workmanship. They are also identified as being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (1:4), redeemed by His blood (1:7), predestined to be partakers of an inheritance according to God's eternal purpose (1:11), enlightened, empowered, and preserved by the Holy Spirit of promise (1:13-14). In Ephesians chapter two we learn that those who are God's workmanship were once dead in sins, directed internally by Satan, and trapped in the lusts of their flesh (2:1-3). God intervened in their lives in sovereign grace by regenerating them and giving them the gift of saving faith (2:4-9). From beginning to end the elect "are God's workmanship," meaning that every aspect of their salvation is owing to God's purpose, His work, and His power. **GOD SAVES SINNERS!** The elect's salvation is a work of God alone!

The experience of sovereign grace is intimated by the phrase **"created in Christ Jesus unto good works."** Because we were spiritually dead, directed by Satan, and trapped in sin we had no spiritual ability. It took God's creative power to impart spiritual life and give the gift of saving faith. Only God has the power to create something where there is nothing. We had no spiritual life, affections, or good works. God literally had to create spiritual life and empower us to bring forth good works. Notice that the ability to bring forth good works comes after God created spiritual life in us through the Spirit's work of regeneration.

Once the elect are created in Christ Jesus they begin to walk in good works by virtue of the indwelling Holy Spirit who sanctifies, leads, instructs, enlightens, and produces spiritual fruit in them (Gal. 5:22-25). This great change was ordained by God before the world began when we were predestined to be conformed to the image of The Lord Jesus Christ. The miracle of God's amazing grace is demonstrated by the fact that He can make the dead live, set them free from the captivity of sin, Satan, and the world, and empower them to walk in the Spirit and bring forth good works. Praise God for His transforming power and sovereign grace!

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The last time someone wrote me and wanted me to be brief,

they did not really want to know the truth, they just wanted to draw me into a debate (which I do not do), which showed me they really did not believe in the Biblical (Baptist) teachings of the Bible. I hope, dear questioner, this is not the case here, and that you really have a sincere desire for the truth. Sorry, but I have my doubts, for if one is really interested in the truth they want to know every **"jot and tittle"** and do not just ask for a brief answer.

Baptist preachers are notorious for being long winded, so let me not disappoint here. I will answer the question briefly, as asked, but first let me tell what the verse does not teach: 1) it does not teach salvation by works, or to work to keep one's salvation; 2) it does not teach that God looked down into the future and saw who would choose Him therefore those are the ones He elected!

One must read the whole book of Ephesians, and in so doing will soon learn that Paul is teaching **"ELECTION, PREDESTINATION, and GRACE," NOT FREE WILL!** One cannot pull a single verse out of God's Word and build a doctrine around it. Oh, I grant you, many have tried, but it simply will not and does not work.

Briefly, the verse, Ephesians 2:10, **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"** teaches that God is sovereign, and He does, what He wants, when He wants, and for whom He wants!

Oops, I have to give the long-winded version now! The elect of God are His workmanship and we are a new creature in Christ Jesus to do good works, which we should walk in, for that is God's

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Why are there so many different kinds of Baptist churches? Most other denominations do not have this problem. – Email

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Simply put, it is because they are closer to the original truth than any others are. Or for sake of clarity, they are closer to the original church than any others are! Selah! Think about it!

If a true Baptist church would split nowadays for whatever reason, then I would expect both sides to claim their side is right and the other side is wrong. Logically then, with right on my side, I would claim the authority of the original church. The other folks would be dismissed, as those in error- departing from the faith, the ONE faith...! Of course, conversely, they would be following those same logical steps in declaring ME and my group as the heretics. Selah! Think about it!

If the dispute that rocked our church was doctrinal, say over free will and whether it was bound or not, then both sides as they looked toward the future, would try to differentiate between themselves and the heretical faction. One side would name themselves (or historically be named by others) as free will Baptists and the other side would, in this case, still be Baptists (period), saying, this is what we have ALWAYS believed. Might have to call them sovereign grace Baptists at times, but in

general, still Baptist.

Other examples and names have cropped up throughout Baptist history, as Satan attacks and unwary sheep and disguised goats will branch off into error, heresy, and eventually apostasy: Particular Baptists vs. General Baptists; Missionary Baptists vs. Hardshell Baptists; Landmark Baptists vs. Universal Church Baptists; Arminian Baptists, Primitive Baptists, Regular Baptists, United Baptists, Reformed Baptists, Fellowship Baptists, etc....

The point to be garnered here is simple. This close to the true church, no one wants to give up the name of Baptist. It is time and God-honored! However, in other denominations, the name is not as precious as they get further and further away from the original truth and the original church (name). Selah! Think about it!

To illustrate, let me use the "Trail of Blood." J. M. Carroll's chart shows irregular churches popping up in the first two centuries. Up to this time, denominations meant nothing. Only had been one true church and all true churches came from the one that Jesus started (Matt. 16:18)! But now, in the third to fourth centuries, we see a full departure from the truth, called a Catholic, or universal church. Endorsed and authorized by the state, it grew monstrously and rapidly added man's doctrines and traditions and felt the need to persecute those faithful churches that refused to accept their authority (and baptism).

In the Ninth Century, there

was a (principally) geographical split in this Catholic church and true to the primary point we have made, neither wanted to give up their name. Hence the Greek Catholic and Roman Catholic churches branched. The Lord's true churches wanted no part in them (or their naming), and were persecuted fiercely taking no name, but those given by their enemies of Montanists, Novations, Paterins, Cathari (Pure ones), Donatists, Paulicians, Albigenses, Waldenses and eventually Anabaptists. This latter became the one that persistently attached itself to these humble folk in every age and area. This ordinance of authority, being the one thing no irregular church could ever lay claim unto.

So the further we see history taking these "modern Christianity denominations" from God's singular beginning for His churches, the more denominations we see popping up, rather than just branches or splinters of one original "denomination," as it were. Out of the Roman Catholics, came the Anglicans. No real need for the Church of England to try to keep the Catholic name. That indeed is what they were trying to distance themselves from! Then the Methodist church split off from the Anglicans. No allegiance to that name either. Then holiness movements and pentecostal movements occurred bringing NEW denominations aplenty. Greater heresies becoming more and more acceptable, because none of these folk had ever heard any real truth whatsoever! Once it was accepted that Protestant churches had no authority, but merely trusted in a universal, invisible church, no authority was ever sought or desired by fledgling denominations, either.

But they all know who the

Baptists are. The stick in the mud. The conservative, unchanging church that requires Bible for every motion, action, sermon and song. And even those that can not hack it in the Baptist church anymore (probably lost goats), usually want to hang on to the name, **"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea"** (Matt. 3:1). Selah! Think about it!

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I would beg to differ with the statement that other denominations do not have the problem of schism and doctrinal differences. Every Protestant denomination ultimately traces their beginnings to differences they had with the heresies and corruptions of the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church is identified as **"...the great whore that sitteth upon many waters... And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH"** (Rev. 17:1, 5). Other denominations are referred to as spiritual harlots who came from the carnal womb of Rome. There are splits, schisms, heresies, and corruptions in every Protestant denomination. They may successfully hide them through political and denominational control, but they still remain.

Baptists are not Protestants. The first Baptist church on earth

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Forum #1

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divine purpose for His elect. And these works were “before ordained by God” meaning before the foundation of the world! By Divine design God’s elect people’s character was to be **“good works!”** Anyone who believes different does not know their Bible!

One last thought; the difference in those who believe in the “sovereignty of God” versus those who believe in the “free will of man” is, those of us who believe in the “sovereignty of God” give God all honor and glory for our salvation, those who believe in the “free will of man” do not. And the sooner they see that, then the sooner they will see that God is a sovereign, holy and an almighty God Who does as He pleases. **“And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou”** (Dan. 4:35)? God Bless!

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Ephesians 2:10 follows after one of the most powerful texts on sovereign grace in the Bible, Ephesians 2:8-9, **“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.”** This is an outstanding text on salvation by grace alone! But the Word of

God has treasure upon treasure in its marvelous richness and it continues powerfully into the sphere of predestinated service in verse 10. “Briefly, let us Selah! Think about it!

1) **“For we are His workmanship, created...”** Introducing us in this verse to the sovereign power of God... He has crafted life, where once there was death! As much so as the first chapter of Genesis, God is claiming the recipients of grace as the WORK of His mighty omnipotence! God the Father with Jeremiah 31:3’s **“everlasting love”** elected us, God the Son walked Calvary’s path to redeem us, and God the Holy Spirit personally regenerates those dead creatures with an inextinguishable flame of life everlasting! The finished product of a regenerate saint is certainly worthy to be called the workmanship of God! Selah! Think about it!

2) **“...created in Christ Jesus unto good works...”** Out of all the marvelous words in this passage, I would like to Selah! Think about it! the word **“unto.”** The saints of God are often reminded of their time of conviction during the work of grace in their lives. We were burdened with the sin in our lives and our utter helplessness to remedy the situation until we were shown the beauty of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit and we repented of our sin, and trusted in the finished work of God the Son. We were saved from an eternity in Hell! Let us never forget that! BUT...! But according to this wondrous text, we are ALSO saved **“unto”** something! Heaven, for sure, but more immediate to our attention is the context: **“good works.”**

Saved not just “from” Hell, but “unto” the glory of God in Heaven. Saved (created!) not just “from”

unrighteousness, but necessarily “unto” righteousness! We, as saints, have been CREATED to perform good works! LORD help us to be faithful in that lifelong endeavor! Selah! Think about it!

3) **“..works, which God hath before ordained...”** I love the Bible teachings of election and predestination, which are ALWAYS unto salvation. These are deep and mind-blowing doctrines that we can (and must) spend much time meditating and studying upon. They give glory to God for our salvation.

But this verse goes FAR beyond the theology of the new birth into the realm of Christian service! God, in these few words penned by the apostle Paul, claims to have foreordained, not merely the people being saved (perhaps Israelites); not even specific FOLK being chosen from before the foundation of the world (Matt and Becky Stepp!); but this fragment of Scripture unloads an irresistible force of divine omniscience upon our doorstep! God has foreordained specific works for us to do! Sure, “Jonah, go to Ninevah!” But also, “Beloved reader, go to the grocery store!” God has predestined every customer in that store to be there when you get there with your precious cargo of gospel truth! Selah! Think about it!

4) **“..that we should walk in them.”** The word **“walk”** in this passage and elsewhere in Scripture is talking about physical exertion. **“And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him”** (Gen. 5:24). **“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God”** (Heb. 11:5). God has foreordained

that we should walk in them/ good works! How awesome! This awesome verse in the middle of an obscure Ephesian letter to a people long dead has the answer to the most difficult philosophical questions of all time! This verse is not juxtaposing, but rather harmonizing God the Deity’s predestinating power with the ultimate responsibility of humankind for their own actions!

Selah! Think about it! Not just believing in ordained events (fate?); not a Sovereign God-King dragging unwilling participants through a parody of orchestrated events (blindly?), but chosen vessels of humanity obediently “walking” of their own volition into “good works” ordained by God from eternity past! Breathtaking! Splendid! Magnificent! **“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power”** (Ps. 110:3). **“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”** (Eph. 2:10). Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



Forum #2

(Continued from page 105) ♦

was founded by Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry. Thus Baptists trace their authority to exist all the way back to Christ and the apostles. True Baptists have never identified or united with the Roman Catholic Church or any of her Protestant daughters.

Even though Baptists have Christ as their Founder, Foundation, and Head they are not without their share of difficulties, problems, and schisms. This is largely owing to the fact that even the most

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Forum #2

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spiritual of the Lord's true churches are made up of depraved sinners who have been saved by grace. The first church had its share of disagreements and misunderstandings even while Jesus was among them. The churches that were organized out of the Jerusalem church, and later the Antioch church, also had schisms and corrections that needed to be made. Imperfect sinners are disagreeable by nature.

I believe the early churches were independent, autonomous, sovereign grace Baptist churches who carefully kept and guarded the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper. They practiced church discipline. They were zealous in preaching the Gospel through missionary work and were earnest in carrying out the Great Commission. Splits and schisms arose because of prideful pastors, the leaven of heresy, and departure of some from the faith once delivered unto the saints. A majority of Baptists in name only (BINOS, I guess you could call them) do not look anything like the Baptist church Jesus started. Why? Simply because they have gone their own way and have departed from the faith, doctrines, and practices of Scripture. Add that to the historical fact that Baptist people are fiercely independent and you come up with another reason why there are so many kinds of Baptist churches. May God give us grace to humbly obey the admonition of Jude 3 to **"...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"** by **"speaking the truth in love"** (Eph. 4:15).

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This is a problem? I do not see a problem. The Lord's Church is a Baptist Church, it is Satan's desire to muddy the waters and make it appear that this Baptist Church is just as good as any other. The true Baptist churches preach and teach the doctrine of God that is plainly expressed in the Scriptures. The burden is placed upon the churches and individuals who are looking for a true church to search the Scriptures and obey them. The Lord's churches have always had distinguishing marks thru out the ages as they do today and always will, till the Lord comes for His church and the believers at the rapture.

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To be clear there is only one true Baptist church. The proof is found in Scripture, **"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved"** (Acts 2:47). If one wanted to be a member of the Lord's church in the early New Testament days there was only one. And that is the one the Lord Himself started while He was on the earth. Whether you believe it or not that church still exists today. And the writers of this Forum are members of it!

I really do not know why so many use the name Baptist. I guess maybe because of John the Baptist. Or maybe because of the Southern Baptist Convention. There are all kinds of conventions and associations of Baptists. And as one old preacher said, "They just want to get on the Baptist band wagon!"

Of course they do not all believe the same thing (regardless of how many there are) when it comes to the sovereignty and grace of God. And as far as we are concerned they preach a false gospel. Any Baptist or denomination that preaches "open up your heart and let Jesus in" and begs one to pray the "sinner's prayer" at the end of their sermon is a false gospel. The gospel is: **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"** (Rom. 1:16). It is the power of God not man.

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered..." (Joel 2:32).

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21).

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9).

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13).

One cannot of his own "free will" do what the above Scriptures say unless he/she has been **"born again"** (born of the Spirit of God)!

And I would differ with the questioner that other denominations do not have these problems. There are many

Methodists, Regular, and Free to name two. Do you know why they are called Free Methodists? Check it out; if you do not have a computer go to the library and read a book about it! I think some people have forgotten before there were computers we actually had to read a book to get information; they still have them (books) at the library you know!

I was a Lutheran for 11 years before the Lord saved me, as I have mentioned before, and have visited several Lutheran churches that were all different. Here are at least three: Wisconsin Synod-the most conservative/traditional of the three, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)-kind of middle of the road. Many of them actually seem pretty tolerant of Catholics. Wow that is funny. Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA)-liberal. Women "pastors", gay relationships=okay, etc.

I asked a minister of a Lutheran church, that my parents attended years ago when I was first saved if I could have a copy of Luther's Catechism. He laughed, called me an Ana-Baptist, and said Lutherans do not use that anymore. Imagine that! Have you ever read the *"Bondage of the Will"* by Martin Luther? Guess what? He did not believe in the "free will" of man as some Lutherans believe today!

Did you know there is more than one kind of Catholic? Do not be too quick to think that other denominations do not have the same problem.

If we may give some words of advice here, do not be too concerned about how many Baptist churches there are or why there are so many, but be concerned about whether you are in the right one! It will make a difference in the end. God Bless!

ROGER REED



The KJV: An English

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man wrote. That makes God the author, for it is His Word and He breathed it or spoke it. If I were going to write a book, but I had no hands; therefore I had someone else write the words as I spoke them, who would the author of the book be? I believe that everyone would agree that the author would be me and the man who wrote down the words was just writing down my words that I spoke. I believe that is what II Timothy 3:16 is teaching us about the written Word of God. God spoke and Moses wrote down God's words found in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. God spoke and John wrote the book of Revelation and so on and so forth. I believe God made sure that they wrote it down perfectly without any error.

I also believe that God has promised to preserve that Word perfectly. **"The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever"** (Ps. 12:6-7). **"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"** (Matt. 24:35). **"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled"** (Matt. 5:18). In the Hebrew **"jot"** comes from the Hebrew **"yodh"** and it is the tenth and smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In the Greek it is the word **"iota"** and it is the ninth letter of the Greek alphabet. A tittle is the little diacritical marks placed above the letters that give it a certain meaning. God is saying that He would preserve every Greek and Hebrew letter and

every diacritical mark that these men made in writing God's Word as He breathed it. So, I believe the Scriptures clearly teach the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of God's Word and the continual preservation of God's Word as it was originally written.

We have already shown that God is the author of the Bible and that, as God breathed the words, He had certain God-called; and God-inspired men to write those words. The ORIGINAL hand written words of those God-inspired men who wrote the words that God breathed are referred to as the original autograph or *autographa*. They did not have a local printing press in those days; so, when an original of anything was going to be copied, it had to be handwritten by someone. So there were scribes that were kind of like a human printing press. They would carefully make copies of the *autographa* so the Word of God could be distributed. So there were copies of the original and copies of the copies of the original. All of these copies were being written jot for jot and tittle for tittle in the original tongue that it was written in, which God promised to preserve throughout the ages according to Matthew 5:18, etc. There was only one original, or *autographa*, of God's written Word. The *autographa* (original) has long since disintegrated into dust. However, God said that He would preserve His Word in every jot and tittle which would be the original language, which He has done through the COPIES of the *autographa* down through the ages which is still available today for anyone who wants a copy of the *Textus Receptus* also known as the Traditional Text (the New Testament) or a copy of the Masoretic Text (the Old Testament).

So as far as I know, there is not any controversy concerning the Masoretic text that makes up the Old Testament. There is, however, some controversy concerning the Greek text that makes up the New Testament. There is what is referred to as the received text. Various other names are used to describe it such as: *Textus Receptus* (Latin for received text), Traditional Text (so called because it was traditionally accepted by everyone), and the Byzantine Text (Byzantium, Greece was where many of the manuscripts were copied). For hundreds and hundreds of years everyone basically copied from this text. That did not change until the 1800's. Then came the critical text also referred to as the Alexandrian text because it is a copy that was copied in Alexandria, Egypt. I am not going to go into all of the explanations of these two Greek texts because I believe that most people reading this article are already familiar with it. Basically, to give it to you in a nutshell, the KJV New Testament of the Bible is an English translation of the *Textus Receptus* or Traditional Text. All of the modern day translations such as the N.I.V. came from the Alexandrian text and that is why they have entire passages of Scripture missing, etc. Remember that the Lord taught us in Matthew 5:18 that not one jot or tittle shall pass away from His Word. I believe that terminology teaches us that God has forever preserved His Word perfectly in its original tongue or language (jot & tittle) in which the inspired men of God wrote it. He has preserved it in the Masoretic Text and the Traditional Text as it was penned by those inspired men of old who wrote what God spoke, every jot and every tittle.

I believe that my God, who

made these promises, cannot lie according to Scripture. **"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began"** (Titus 1:2). **"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good"** (Num. 23:19)? He has preserved it in the traditional languages in which it was written preserving every jot and every tittle. It is the fact that God cannot lie that causes me to maintain that God has promised to preserve His Word in 100% accuracy in the languages in which it was originally written which still exists today where He has preserved every jot and tittle. There are those who maintain that the King James English Translation of God's Word is the fulfillment of God's promise that He would preserve His Word. I believe that the King James English Translation is an English translation of what God still has preserved today in the original tongues in which His Word was written. Because it is a translation, I believe that it has a few translation problems where the translators did not properly translate into our English language what God spoke and what those inspired men of old wrote down in the original tongues. I will show some of these translation issues in this article.

I believe the first thing to realize is that there is a big difference between a copy and a translation. A copy is a copy of an original; word for word in the same language, etc. and that is what God has promised to PERFECTLY preserve in 100% accuracy, every jot and tittle. A translation, on the other hand, is something that is

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translated from its original form into another language thus you are relying on the translators to accurately translate from the original language to whatever language that it is being translated to. No where in God's Word do I find a promise that He was going to preserve His Word in 100% accuracy in every single known language in the world. If that were the case, then God would be a liar because His Word has never been translated into every language in the world, let alone translated in 100% accuracy in every language in the world. God's Word declares that He is not a liar. I accept that by faith and maintain that He has preserved His Word down through the ages in the original tongues that it was written in.

According to the Wycliffe Bible Translators Statistics of 2013, there are over 6,900 known languages spoken in the world. Out of those 6,900 languages there are at least 1,900 languages spoken in the world today in which the Word of God has not been translated. According to these same statistics, the world's population today is seven billion, and out of those seven billion, there is an estimated one hundred and eighty million people who do not have the Word of God translated into the language that they speak and understand. So, if God's promise was to preserve His Word perfectly in every language in the world (which He did not promise) then God did not fulfill that promise. God never fulfilled that promise because He never made it. What He did promise was to preserve His Word perfectly in every jot and tittle (the original language in which it was written) down through the ages which He

has done. All translations are just that, translations.

I use the 1769 King James English Translation of the Bible because it is the very best and most accurate English translation that we have available to us. Some are claiming, however, that the King James English Translation is a completely 100% perfect translation with no translation problems, and that just is not true. I have believed this since I began preaching in 1999.

The first King James Authorized English Translation of the Bible was the 1611 edition. What most of us read from today is not a 1611 edition, but a 1769 edition which is what I preach from, and what all of our brethren that we fellowship with preach from, to my knowledge. The Authorized King James Translation of the Bible that some are claiming is an absolutely 100% perfect translation of God's Word has gone through editions and revisions since its first edition in 1611. Those editions and revisions would include 1629, 1638, 1762 and 1769. So, I ask, if the King James English Translation of the Bible is an absolutely 100% perfect translation with no translation issues, then why was it revised over and over again, and which one is the perfect one; was it the 1611, the 1629, the 1638, the 1762 or the 1769 that most of us use today?

There are people today that are shaking their 1769 edition of the KJV Bible at people and claiming that they use the 1611 edition, because they do not know the difference. There are people who are holding a 1769 edition of the KJV in their hand and declaring that the KJV is an absolutely, 100% perfect translation with no translation problems and they are declaring that people like me are

a heretic, a blasphemer, and one that is teaching the age old lie of the Devil. So, let us put it to the test.

Let us begin by comparing the King James 1611 translation of the Word of God with the 1769 edition that we use today to prove that there is a difference.

Matthew 12:23 (1769) - **“And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?”**

Matthew 12:23 (1611) - “And all the people were amazed, and said, Is this the son of David?” (the word **not** was omitted in the 1611 edition but if you look it up in the original Greek you will find that it is there)

Luke 1:3 (1769) - **“It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus”**

Luke 1:3 (1611) - “It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,” (the word **all** was omitted from the 1611 edition, but it is there in the original Greek)

Mark 10:18 (1769) - **“And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.”**

Mark 10:18 (1611) - “And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is no man good but one, that is, God.” (the 1611 edition reads **“no man”** instead of **“none”**)

I Corinthians 15:6 (1769) -

“After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.”

I Corinthians 15:6 (1611) - “And that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.” (the 1611 edition used the word “and” instead of “after” which changes the chronology of the events that are taking place in this chapter).

II Timothy 4:13 (1769) - **“The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.”**

II Timothy 4:13 (1611) - “The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, but especially the parchments.” (**and the books** was omitted from the 1611 edition, but it is there in the original Greek)

The examples above are just a few of many changes that have taken place in the King James translation from 1611 to 1769. The 1769 that we are using is obviously more accurate, because the 1611 edition omitted things that are in the original Greek. So, the FACTS prove, that the King James translators did not get it perfect in 1611, they did not get it perfect in 1629, they did not get it perfect in 1638, and they did not get it perfect in 1762. Do you think they got it perfect in 1769?

Keep in mind the inspired men of God such as Moses and John penned the Word of God as He breathed it. They were inspired of

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God. The King James translators of 1611 or 1769 were not. They were men that were chosen by the King of England to translate God's Word into the English language for the Church of England. The Church of England was basically a Catholic church without a Pope. We are talking about the people who persecuted our forefathers.

So let us examine the 1769 edition and see if it is 100% perfectly translated. Let us first consider Acts 12:1-4, **"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people."** First of all I would like you to notice why Herod decided to take Peter and have him executed. It was because he knew it would please the Jews. Contrary to what some might imply, Herod cared about what pleased the Jews. Now, it says that he put him into prison until after Easter. Look that word Easter up in a Strong's Concordance and Dictionary and you will find that it is the Greek word "*pascha*" and that it is defined as "the Passover." *Pascha* is the word that is used in the Traditional Text in which God has preserved every jot and tittle. It is not defined as Easter; it is defined as Passover. You will find the word *pascha* in the traditional text that God has preserved a total of twenty-seven times. Twenty-

six of those times the KJV translators rightly translated it Passover. One time they wrongly translated it Easter. To say that Easter is the correct translation is to say that the 1769 KJV is correct and that the traditional text is wrong. To say that Easter is the correct translation is to challenge the validity of God's Holy Word that He has promised to preserve, because the jot and tittle that He promised to preserve says that He intended to wait until after the *Pascha* or Passover. To say that Easter is correct is to put more faith and confidence in the English translation of some fallible men from the Church of England than the God-inspired men who penned the original. God breathed and had one of those inspired men write the word *pascha* which is Passover. The KJV translators changed that word to the name of a pagan holiday named after a false goddess. I also find it interesting that later they changed it to the proper translation which is Passover in the New King James Version. So, the 1769 KJV is not a completely perfect translation because it has a mistranslation in Acts 12:4. That is not speculation; it is a fact that can be proven. Now, if I must be called a heretic for such a statement and go down as being accused of teaching the "age old lie of the Devil," let me see how many great men of years gone by will have to go down with me. Consider the following quotes:

B.H. Carroll, who is well known for his Baptist History work entitled, "The Trail of Blood" has the following to say about Easter being found in the book of Acts in certain English translations, "Pious Episcopalians and Romans use this verse of the American Version to confirm their custom of celebrating Easter, but the

Greek plainly shows that 'Passover' is precisely the word." (An Interpretation of the English Bible - B. H. Carroll - *The Acts* / Page 167).

E.G. Cook states the following: "Yes, I am aware that you can find the word 'Easter' in your Bible. But the word 'Easter' in Acts 12:4 comes from the Greek word PASCHA which means Passover. But the Episcopalian translators of the King James version, the scared Catholics that they were, loved their Easter so much that they just had to put it in the Bible somewhere. So they just mistranslated this word PASCHA in order to do it." (*What Is Easter?* by E. G. Cook).

V.C. Mayes, who was a well known Sovereign Grace Baptist that wrote the Sovereign Grace book entitled, "Leaves, Worms, Butterflies & T.U.L.I.P.S." had the following to say, "The word Easter was put in Acts 12:4 by the translators and is not from the inspired writings of the New Testament. Remember it should read 'Passover,' also remember 'Easter' is of Babylonian and pagan origin, and God forbid that any Christian should adopt any of Babylonian or pagan Rome's festivals." (*The Naked Truth* - V. C. Mayes - 1979 Edition / Page 10)

That is just a few of the men that I can name. If I must go down being falsely accused of being a heretic and teaching the age old lie of the Devil, at least I will have some fine men of years gone by to keep me company.

Let us note another problem. When King James had his translators translate the Word of God into English for the Church of England, he gave them certain rules that they had to abide by. Rule number one states that they were to follow the Bishop's Bible (a previous translation)

and alter it as little as the original would permit. Rule number three states that the old ecclesiastical words were to be kept as the word church and NOT TO BE TRANSLATED. King James would not allow the translators to translate the word *ekklesia* when it was in reference to the Lord's *ekklesia*, that is a historical fact that you can look up yourself. In Acts 19:32,39 and 41 the King James translators correctly translated the word *ekklesia* as assembly, but they translated it church in all of the other verses just like King James commanded. The King James's translators were translating the Word of God into the English language for the Church of England which taught the doctrine of universal church. If they properly translated the word, it would clearly reveal the error of what the Church of England was teaching. If you look up the word *ekklesia* in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* it states that the Greek word *ekklesia* describes an assembly of citizens within a Greek city-state that were summoned by a committee of the Boule or council for regular meetings and special sessions. It was made of male citizens that were 18 years old or older that had the right to hear appeals, take part in the election of magistrates, and confer extralegal rights on individuals. Motions had to originate in the Boule, so the *ekklesia* could only initiate the business that they were given by the Boule; they could not initiate any new business. To do otherwise would make them an unlawful assembly. They could only conduct the business that they were given the authority to conduct. There is historical proof that the Athenian *Ekklesia* was already functioning by 621 BC

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which means it was in common use long before Christ used it in Matthew 16:18, and that is the very reason that Christ used it to describe HIS EKKLESIA. Christ's *Ekklesia* would be a called out, properly organized assembly under His authority and power. His *Ekklesia* would only be permitted to carry out the business that He gave them to conduct. That is why Christ used the word to describe what He would build. Had the King James translators translated the word *ekklesia* properly when it spoke of the Lord's *Ekklesia* it would have destroyed their teaching of universal church. So, it was forbidden for them to translate it. Instead, they had to use the word church which was the common word that was being used in the English language. What does the word church actually mean? It comes from the Greek word *kuriakos* which means belonging to the Lord. This Greek word came to be transliterated and used in the Old English form as *kee-ree-ke*, then *kerke*, and eventually church as the English spelling of the word changed down through the years. The problem is the KJV translators were not transliterating the Greek word *kuriakos* as church; they were refusing to translate the word *ekklesia* and, instead exchanging it for another word which had nothing at all to do with the word *ekklesia*. The Greek word *kuriakos* is found twice in the New Testament. It is found in I Corinthians 11:20, "**When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.**" And in Revelation 1:10, "**I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me**

a great voice, as of a trumpet."

In both instances the Greek word *kuriakos* was rightly translated "**the Lord's**" because that is the meaning of the word *kuriakos*. Again, we find a translation problem. Which one is correct? Is it the Traditional Text which God said that He would preserve (every jot and tittle), or is it the King James English Translators? Without apology, I am sticking with the inspired men of God who penned the word *ekklesia* as God breathed it.

The King James translators also refused to translate the word *baptizo* and instead they transliterated the word as baptize. By transliterate, I simply mean they exchanged the Greek letters for the corresponding English letters to spell a Greek word out in English. If they had actually translated the word it would be translated immerse, but how could they translate it immerse when the Catholics and the Church of England were sprinkling people instead of immersing them? These translators were catering to a church that taught universal church and sprinkled instead of immersed people.

With all of the above evidence laid out, I maintain that, when God promised that He would preserve His Word, He has done just as He said He would in Matthew 5:18. He preserved every jot and tittle in the original languages which we still have today. According to the above evidence, if I were to accept the idea that the King James English Translation is an absolutely perfect translation of the Word of God into the English language, then I would have to believe that the Traditional Text which God has preserved down through the ages was faulty and that would make my God a liar. God has promised to preserve His Word perfectly,

but nowhere in His Word, has He promised to preserve it in every language in the world. If that were the case, then my God would again have to be a liar because the Word of God has never even been translated into every known language, let alone translated completely perfect into every known language. In Psalms 12:7 David by the inspiration of God wrote, "**Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.**" "**This generation**" spoke of the generation living in David's day as he penned those words. Where was the King James English Translation at that time? It did not exist and it would not exist for

hundreds of years. Where then was God preserving His Word from David's generation forward? He was preserving it in the original tongues in which it was written. I must maintain that my God has kept His promise and that His Word is perfectly preserved in every jot and tittle of the original language in which it was penned, which we still have copies of today, and that the King James English Translation of the Bible is an English TRANSLATION of the perfectly preserved Word of God and the very best translation that we have available to us in the English language.



THE

BIBLE AND OTHER NEWSPAPER

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

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

MANHATTAN'S "BIBLE HOUSE" GOING UP FOR SALE

(WNS)--The American Bible Society (ABS) announced today it plans to sell its 12-story New York City headquarters. The sale of the prime real estate on Broadway in Manhattan comes as ABS tries to reinvent itself after a decade of turmoil. ABS, founded in 1816, helps distribute Bibles in multiple languages around the world. But it has struggled in recent years with finances, leadership, and the high cost of maintaining its historic headquarters, which needs \$20 million in renovations by 2016 to meet city code. The organization moved into its building, known locally as the Bible House, in 1966 following a ribbon-cutting by Billy Graham. The property's sale

could mean the end of a Christian landmark in one of the world's most secular cities. ABS spokesman Geof Morin told WORLD that the organization plans to maintain a "strategic" presence in the city, but did not specify whether that presence would be physical. Only about 80 of the organization's 220 employees work from New York. About 75 work from a facility in Valley Forge, Pa., and the rest work remotely from locations across the country.

BILL GATES: NO SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION FOR HOW THE WORLD CAME ABOUT

(WNS)--In a long, in-depth interview with *Rolling Stone* published in March, Microsoft

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founder Bill Gates said that while he agrees God could be a figment of mankind's needy imagination, science cannot fully explain how the world came about. "I agree with people like Richard Dawkins that mankind felt the need for creation myths," Gates told writer Jeff Goodall. "Before we really began to understand disease and the weather and things like that, we sought false explanations for them. Now science has filled in some of the realm—not all—that religion used to fill. But the mystery and the beauty of the world is overwhelmingly amazing, and there's no scientific explanation of how it came about. To say that it was generated by random numbers, that does seem, you know, sort of an uncharitable view. [laughs] I think it makes sense to believe in God, but exactly what decision in your life you make differently because of it, I don't know."

FEDERAL COURT GIVES KANSAS GREEN LIGHT TO DEFUND PLANNED PARENTHOOD

(WNS)--A federal appeals court ruled in March that Kansas can strip two Planned Parenthood centers of federal family planning money as the abortion provider's legal challenge progresses. Kansas is among several conservative states that have sought to defund Planned Parenthood. At issue in Tuesday's ruling was money distributed to states under Title X, a federally financed family planning program. It provides free or discounted birth control and health screenings to women with incomes up to 250 percent of the poverty level. Planned Parenthood receives about 25 percent of this funding nationwide.

VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES

PRIME KIDS FOR AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

(WNS)--Violent video games train children to think and act more aggressively, according to a recent study conducted at Iowa State University and published in *Jama Pediatrics*. While a lot of studies have shown a relationship between violent video play and aggressive behaviors, "we wanted to look at what is actually changing in the brain that would account for it," said Douglas Gentile, associate professor of psychology at Iowa State University and the study's lead author. The researchers discovered that violent video games affect how children see the world and change their thinking in three ways. First, children who play violent video games tend to attribute hostility to the actions of other people, even when no hostility is present, because the games have taught them to be vigilant in watching for enemies. Secondly, the researchers found the children began to believe that it was acceptable to respond aggressively when provoked. Lastly, the children experienced an increase in aggressive fantasies. According to the study, the children's aggressive thinking predicted aggressive behavior two years later.

MISSISSIPPI PASSES RELIGIOUS FREEDOM PROTECTIONS

(WNS)--Mississippi lawmakers passed legislation on April 1 that reiterates constitutional protections for religious freedom. Proponents say the law is necessary to ensure people cannot be forced to violate their religious beliefs in the face of discrimination claims. The bill is similar to legislation passed in Arizona last month but vetoed by Republican Gov. Jan Brewer after a nationwide outcry claimed it was tantamount to Jim Crow laws for gays and lesbians. Like the Arizona

law, the Mississippi statue does not mention homosexuality or give people a free pass to discriminate against anyone. It merely says people who feel their religious freedom has been violated can use that as a defense in a legal proceeding. Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant, a Republican, said he plans to sign the legislation as soon as it reaches his desk.

FOUNDER OF WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH DIES AT AGE 84

(WNS)--Fred Phelps Sr., the founder of a Kansas sect known for its anti-homosexuality picketing at military funerals, has died. He was 84. The former figurehead of Westboro Baptist Church was hospice-bound in Topeka, Kan., and had stopped eating and drinking at the time of his death on Wednesday night, his estranged son Nathan told the Associated Press on Sunday. Nathan Phelps said a new board of eight elders excommunicated his father last summer after a power struggle, possibly contributing to the decline in his health. "I'm not sure how I feel about this," he wrote on Facebook. "Terribly ironic that his devotion to his god ends this way. Destroyed by the monster he made." Nathan Phelps left the sect 37 years ago and is now a religious skeptic and gay-rights advocate. Fred Phelps is survived by his wife of 61 years, Margie Marie Phelps. The couple had 13 adult children, nine of whom remain in the church and four of whom have left the church, according to the *Topeka Capital-Journal*. Roughly 20 of the couple's 54 grandchildren also have left the church.

GAY RIGHTS GROUPS FORCE MOZILLA CEO TO RESIGN

(WNS)--Brendan Eich stepped down from his post as Mozilla's CEO after gay rights groups lambasted

the company for promoting a leader who supports traditional marriage. In a statement posted online, Mozilla chairwoman Mitchell Baker said Eich was stepping down for the good of the company, which he co-founded. She also apologized for promoting him from his position as chief technology officer in the first place. "We didn't act like you'd expect Mozilla to act," she wrote. "We didn't move fast enough to engage with people once the controversy started. We're sorry. We must do better." The company, which created the popular web browser Firefox, promoted Brendan Eich from chief technology officer to its top leadership position on March 24. He's certainly qualified for the job. Eich co-founded Mozilla and invented JavaScript, one of the web's most ubiquitous programming languages. In 2008, Eich gave \$1,000 to the campaign to pass Proposition 8, the constitutional amendment that banned same-sex marriage in California. A lower court ruling struck down the amendment, and the U.S. Supreme Court left that decision place last year. Eich's contribution was publicly reported then and he faced some criticism for his stance. But his promotion to CEO last week whipped the old criticism into a firestorm.

BUS COMPANY REFUSES AD SPACE TO PRO-LIFE GROUP

(WNS)--An Indiana bus company that refused to let a pro-life group advertise on city buses in Ft. Wayne is going to have to justify its decision in federal court. Last fall, Women's Health Link (WHL), a free pro-life referral service, requested to place dozens of advertising cards on the interior of buses. The ad features a photo of a young woman with the tagline "You're Not Alone" and the organization's contact information. But bus service Citilink denied

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the request twice because WHL's website discussed "controversial issues" and the group is affiliated with Allen County Right to Life, according to Alliance Defending Freedom, which filed WHL's lawsuit. "We feel that this ad does not educate the general public or raise awareness regarding a significant social issue in a viewpoint neutral manner," a Citilink representative said. Citilink has allowed other healthcare-related non-profits to advertise on its buses, including Parkview Health, The Foundation for Fighting Blindness, and the United Way.

BOY SCOUTS ATTENDANCE DOWN

(WNS)--For more than a century, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) has enjoyed a special place in the minds and hearts of Americans. But following recent controversies, including the decision to allow openly homosexual Scouts into the program, the view of Americans toward Scouting seems to be shifting. According to a survey by Rasmussen Reports, "favorable views of the Boy Scouts of America continue to decline." According to the polling firm's latest telephone survey, 59 percent of adult Americans have a favorable opinion of the Scouts. However, Rasmussen says this number is "down six points from 65 percent last May and a 14-point drop from 73 percent in February 2012. Twenty-eight percent now view the Boy Scouts unfavorably." Perhaps most troubling for the Scouts, even its supporters are wavering. "The latest findings include 21 percent with a 'Very Favorable' opinion, down from 40 percent two years ago." A full 10 percent of adults have a "very unfavorable" view of the BSA.

JUDGE RULES OHIO MUST RECOGNIZE GAY MARRIAGES CONDUCTED ELSEWHERE

According to the Times-Gazette of Hillsboro, OH, a federal judge in Cincinnati sided with several gay couples Monday, ruling the state must recognize same-gender marriages conducted outside of Ohio. The judge found there was no "legitimate justification for the state's ongoing arbitrary discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and, therefore, Ohio's marriage recognition bans are facially unconstitutional and unenforceable under any circumstances." Republican Attorney General Mike DeWine has signed off on new petition language for a group that hopes to overturn Ohio's ban on gay marriage.



Set Loose

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people,



There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him" (Luke 13:10-17).

I believe this miracle of healing that the Lord Jesus Christ performed in our text passage is a beautiful picture of the salvation which God has provided for His people. I believe this account is also a beautiful picture of the way in which our Lord and Saviour will care for His people. Today, I would like for us to consider some ways in which our caring and almighty Saviour will pour out His love upon us, and will "set us loose" from the bands and powers of Satan, Hell, and sin.

FROM SATAN

"And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day" (Luke 13:16)? Is it not wonderful to know that our Saviour is stronger than Satan? Is it not wonderful to know that when He comes to us, He is able to deliver us from the bonds of Satan, which have held us all of our lives? **"But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he**

taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils" (Luke 11:20-22). Satan is strong, but Jesus Christ is stronger. The bands with which Satan had bound this woman were strong, but Jesus Christ is stronger.

Surely, this woman was bound by Satan, in the sense that she was crippled with the physical infirmities that Satan had brought upon her. However, the spiritual bonds are far worse! Each of us is born into this world with bands that bind us unto Satan. We are bound to Satan, and he has blinded us to our own destruction! This spiritual blindness that Satan afflicts us with, will destroy each and every one of the sons of men – except God would intervene. **"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them"** (II Cor. 4:3-4).

When the Lord Jesus delivered the Apostle Paul unto salvation; and when the Lord Jesus appeared unto him and told him what would be his life from henceforth, He said this unto him: **"Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me"** (Acts 26:17-18). The task that was given unto the Apostle Paul, is a task that is shared by all of those that would worship Jesus Christ, and testify of the salvation that God has graciously granted unto us. We are all tasked with the duty of preaching unto the lost, in the hopes that God will **"open their eyes,"** and that He

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Set Loose

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will deliver them from **“the power of Satan unto God.”** Praise the Lord, the gospel that we proclaim is so powerful and effective, it can deliver men and women from the bands and the bonds of Satan!

One time, the Apostle Paul instructed Timothy in his ministry this way: **“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will”** (II Tim. 2:24-26). Timothy was sent to minister to a people that were **“taken captive”** by Satan. You and I are former captives of Satan, who are now sent forth to share the gospel of salvation to others who are still yet captive and bound by the powers of Satan. This can be an intimidating task – but the Giver of Life, and the Granter of Salvation is the One Who has sent us. And, surely, He possesses the power and the authority to deal with Satan!

FROM HELL AND DAMNATIONS

In our text passage we are told that Jesus said unto the woman, **“...Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.”** Then, we are told the Lord Jesus laid His hands on her, **“...and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.”** When the Lord Jesus Christ comes to us and sets us loose, He sets us on the straight and narrow way, and we are set free from the terrible dooms and damnations of Hell. In our natural condition, and mostly unknown to ourselves, we are bound for Hell, and bound unto the damnation of the wicked.

Though we may not know it, we are, in a sense, walking on a thin crust of earth that might burst open at any moment, and drop us headlong into the pits of Hell. I know, that from the perspective of God, we were never destined for Hell. But, humanly speaking, our fate in Hell is certain and it is deserved. We are condemned by our inherited depravity and the sins which we have committed. This condemnation is only lifted by the power, and the grace, and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Yet, millions and billions of people walk the face of this earth not knowing that Hell and damnation await them. In our text passage we find that the Lord Jesus Christ referred to the ruler of the synagogue as a “hypocrite.” Well, I believe that – just as Judaism was populated by mostly hypocrites; even so, Christianity today is mostly populated with hypocrites. And, if Christianity cannot hope to save itself, what hope does the world at large, and the proponents of other religions have? Surely, the world is full of men and women who are walking this earth, going about their daily business, and yet they are spiraling, inescapably downward towards the gaping mouth of Hell and eternal destruction! What a terrible fate awaits the lost! What an awful place is the destination of all men who reject God and His Son, Jesus Christ! All natural men are bound for Hell, and we are condemned already.

Oh, but God is good and gracious! He has determined to save some, and He has determined to “set loose” some that were bound for Hell. By His grace we are saved, our souls are converted, and our course is altered! Instead, we are turned loose from that terrible fate which we deserved, and we are set on the way unto Heaven. **“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide**

is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt. 7:13-14). Just as this woman was **“made straight, and glorified God;”** we, too, are changed from the infirm and crooked persons that we were, and we are set on the strait and narrow way unto Heaven!

There are only two conditions that exist among men: either a man is a servant and follower of God; or, a man is a servant and a follower of Satan. Of course, most of those that follow Satan, will not openly and freely admit that they are following after the devil. However, in our natural condition, this is certainly the case. There is no middle ground. There is no straddling the fence. All men either follow God, or Satan. Now, we may, in our natural condition, follow after Satan, and still do some good. We may, in our natural condition, exhibit some good, moral, and even noble characteristics. But, each of these good characteristics, and all of the good that we do, is all performed for our own benefit, or for the benefit of others. We never, in our natural conditions, will do something good because we love God! And, nothing that we do in this life will have any positive effect on our life to come, unless we do what we do and say what we say based upon our love and obedience unto God our Saviour.

Just as there are only two conditions of men in this life; even so, there are only two fates that await men in the life to come. Either a man will leave this life and enter into Heaven; or, a man will leave this life, enter into Hell, and in the last day, Hell itself will be cast into the lake of fire. **“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in**

the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29). It is a terrible but true fact – all men are born into this world with the deserved fate of Hell that awaits them. Unless God would intervene, all men would follow the course that will lead to service unto Satan in this life, and judgment and torture in Hell in the life to come.

However, praise be to God! the Saviour that did “set loose” the woman who was bound with the spirit of infirmity has also taken it upon Himself to deliver and “set loose” those who were bound for Hell and damnation! He alone can save us! He alone is our Rescuer! He alone is the One Who can release us from the fate that awaits us, and grant us entrance into the halls of Heaven!

When considering the perils and the terrors of Hell, David once said, **“I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell”** (Ps. 86:12-13). The deserved fate to which we were bound has been averted, and we have been “set loose.” **“The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail”** (Isa. 51:14). Surely, in all of the world there should be a sound of praise and thanksgiving, as the redeemed of the Lord will joyously cry out unto God as we consider the redemption and the salvation that has been granted unto us.

FROM SIN AND EARTHLY PLEASURES

In our natural condition, you

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Set Loose

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and I preferred sin instead of righteousness. In our natural condition – yea, even in the flesh that we yet inhabit – you and I are attracted to the pleasures of this life, rather than the pleasures that are enjoyed by godly and good men and women. Our condition is described thusly: **“Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you”** (James 5:5-6).

When I consider my own life, I am ashamed. I see what the Lord has done for me, and I see the poor returns that I have rendered unto Him. I see what it is He wants me to be and do. And I see how I have failed Him. I see the meager expectations I have for myself. And I see how I fail to meet even those poor expectations. What is it that causes me to struggle so much? What is it that causes you to struggle so much? What is the malady that afflicts each of God's people in the flesh? Well, I think we can safely say, that though we are saved, we are still only sinners saved by grace. I think we can safely say, that though the spirit is quickened and made alive; and though the soul has been converted and saved; still, the flesh is weak, and this mortality is afflicted with sins and the temptations and pleasures of this life.

And yet, I do not want to offer an excuse! There is no excuse for sin! Do you realize that every sin, and pleasure, and temptation that may draw you away has been successfully endured and resisted by another – some other saint that has gone before, or by the Lord Jesus Himself? Do you realize that there is power in the God we serve that can be granted unto us – if only we will seek Him – so that we do not have

to sin? I am not saying we will ever achieve perfection and/or holiness in this life. I am simply saying God has set us loose from the bands of sin and the pleasures of this life, so that we are not bound to follow them.

Sin is a clinging and persistent problem in the lives of men and women all around the world. You and I are not alone as we struggle with the sins and earthly pleasures which surround us! Many sermons concerning sin will follow a pattern such as this: Jesus Christ has freed us from the “penalty” of sin; Jesus Christ is currently freeing us from the “power” of sin; and, praise the Lord, one day soon, when Jesus Christ shall return, we will be caught up to be with Him, and we will be freed from even the “presence” of sin. You and I are currently in the condition of being freed from the “power” of sin. Some days, it seems as though sin will get a hold on us and will affect the way we live our lives. Other days, it seems the power of God is with us, and we can resist the flesh and sin, and we can walk closer to our Lord.

So, sometimes it seems we succeed in resisting the sins and pleasures of the mortal flesh; and other times we have no success as we strive against the worldly ways of the people amongst whom we live. I know we are weak; but, I know God is strong. I know that, on our own, we cannot prevail – even in this life – as we seek to contend with the powers of sin and this world. And yet, the power of God is such, that even persons like you and I, can be loosed and delivered from the powers and the attractions of the sins and pleasures that ensnare so many! **“But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where en-**

vying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace” (James 3:14-18). We can resist sin. God has given us the victory over the **“earthly, sensual, devilish”** things that surround us. And, He has granted us access to the **“wisdom that is from above,”** so that we can indulge in those things that are heavenly and Godly. He has “set us loose” from the desires of this life, if only we will trust and depend on Him.

CONCLUSION

In the matter of salvation, there are too many obstacles for you and me to overcome on our own. When it comes to our own souls, we are helpless to save ourselves. Satan has bound us. Our sins have bound us. Our souls are bound over unto the pit and fires of Hell.

But, there is One that can save us. There is One that can loose us from the pangs of sin and death and the powers of Hell and Satan. That One is Jesus Christ. **“And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go”** (John 11:44). When the Lord will “set us loose,” who can bind us? When the Lord will set us free, who can confine us? When the Lord will save us, who can condemn us?

*The gospel brings tidings, glad tidings indeed,
To mourners in Zion, who want to be freed
From sin, and from Satan, and Mount Sinai's flame,
Good news of salvation, through Jesus the Lamb.*

*What sweet invitations the gospel contains,
To men heavy laden with bondage and chains;
It welcomes the weary to come and be blessed
With ease from their burdens, in Jesus to rest.*

♦ (Continued on page 116)

Berea Baptist Broadcast

Financial Report

3-1-2014 to 3-31-2014

Beginning Balance	\$6,851.68
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Calvary I. B. C., Everson, WA	200.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	200.00
.....	725.00
TOTAL	7,576.68
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	363.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	363.98
.....	7,212.70
Interest05
ENDING BALANCE	\$7,212.75



Berea Baptist Banner

Financial Report

3-1-2014 to 3-31-2014

Beginning Balance	\$1,388.21
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	100.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	313.45
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Carol Willitt, Edgewater, FL	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grae B. C., Corbin, KY	200.00
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
Landmark B. C., Moncks Corner, SC	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	30.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Pumerville, AR	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	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	12.00
Anonymous	2,200.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Sub Total	\$4,562.95
TOTAL	\$5,951.16
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	490.00
Postage	704.29
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Dividing checks	150.00
Bank Service charge	13.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,833.25
ENDING BALANCE	\$2,117.91

Set Loose

(Continued from page 115) ♦

*For every poor mourner, who thirsts for the Lord,
A fountain is opened in Jesus the Word;
Their poor parched conscience to cool and to wash
From guilt and pollution, from dead works and dross.*
William Gadsby. Gadsby #524



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs, LA and pastor Jerry Dodson would like to announce that their 18th Annual Bible Conference is scheduled for Saturday, May the 31st through Sunday, June 1st.

Service times are 10:00 a.m. both Saturday and Sunday. A noon meal will follow each day.

Scheduled speakers are Brothers Joey Newell, Lucien Lesage, and Jerry Dodson.

Bro. Keith Laurence will lead the music. Everyone is invited to attend.

The The Grace Baptist Church and Pastor Andy Proctor would like to announce their Annual Spring Meeting scheduled for May 14th-18th.

Service times are 7:30 p.m. each evening and Sunday at 9:45 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. The guest speaker is Elder Jeff Short of Charlestown, WV.

For more information please contact Pastor Proctor at (352) 895-1437.

The Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Whitestown, IN is having a weekend meeting May 30th thru April 1st.

Service times are Friday at 7:30 p.m., Saturday at 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., and Sunday at 9:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

The guest speak is Elder Arthur Blevins of Aztec, NM. Several visiting pastors will also speak on Saturday.

For more information contat (317) 769-3247 or (317) 769-2998 or Email at ifarnham1@gmail.com.

Are We There Yet?

By R. H. Heatherly
of Wingo, Kentucky

Religious deception and hypocrisy is having a heyday this week of March 28, 2014. All the TV. news channels have been joyfully, gleefully and reverently awing over our socialist and Muslim loving president's visit with the Pope of Rome in the Vatican. We are told over and over again how the two have discussed the problems of the world and how best to solve them.

Again, as in every incident involving this leader of the "mother of harlots" church (Rev. 17:5) the world is religiously force fed hours of praise with oohs and ahs from his loyal worshippers calling him "his holiness," "the holy see," "the holy father," all names belonging to none but God in Heaven; and therefore open unashamed and ignorant blasphemy. Just today (Friday, March 28, 2014), Charles Krauthammer of Fox News referred to him as being infallible. Since infallible means: free from error; that cannot be mistaken, incapable of error in the exposition of doctrine on faith and morals. It is no wonder

that all of the spiritually ignorant, morally bankrupt and blinded leaders of the world patronize and fawn over him.

It is difficult to believe that mentally competent people blindly and stubbornly insist upon infallibility for a church and a man who is the sole authority of an organization which has been through the ages and is today beset with immorality, political corruption and scriptural heresy. This is glaringly evident to any who are capable of rational reasoning. The thousands of cases of sodomy practiced by the "holy father's" priests on boys, the selling of indulgences to sin, Mary worship, the charging money by priests to pray the loved ones of members out of a supposed purgatory, killing millions of innocent people who refused to accept their religious poison and tampering with the Word of God to promote their heresy is irrefutable.

The Roman Catholic church and her papa (pope) declares herself as the one and only church, and when she can get by with it she bullies and forces herself upon men and governments using the authority, the law, money and military of the very people she seeks to dominate, and she is so deceptive and persuasive she



Quotes
from
Brother
Ritechus
N.
Dignation
by Joseph Harris

EXPRESSIFY - Makin' your point of view known, whether anyone wants to hear it or not.

is able to do it with the blessing of the poor deceived people she enslaves.

If it were not documented by facts of history, it would be unbelievable that a nation of people and their government controlled by leaders who so hate God and the Bible, they constantly fight against any Bible reading or prayers in the name of Jesus Christ in any government buildings and schools under the guise of separation of church and government. These same people constantly coddle, honor, and seek the blessings and advice of this harlot church. They do this while unashamedly treating the true New Testament Baptist Church as ignorant, unrealistic, a violation of constitutional separation of Church and State and of being embarrassing.

Second Thessalonians 2:10-12 says, **"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."**

As the children in the back seat keep asking over and over again: Are we there yet?



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