

# 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*

## What Are We Created For?

By Matthew Stepp  
of Wayne, West Virginia

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.



And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting

life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:37-40).

### 1. THE SELFLESS LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

◊ (Continued on page 2)

## A Lamp Unto Our Feet

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105).

We are concentrating on the first half of this verse – especially the words "a lamp unto my feet." I want to take this first half of the verse and apply it in a real way to each of us. Really, what I intend to do, is to concentrate on the effect that the Word of God, as a "lamp," has on our "feet." I want us to consider what the Word of God, as



a "lamp," can accomplish in our lives. Consider with me, for a while, the relationship between the Word of God and our own

lives, and the changes that take place in our lives, as a result of the Word of God.

### OUR FEET ARE DIRTY

I think I will start out by reminding us all of our sinful and

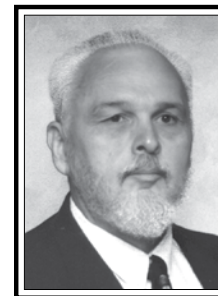
◊ (Continued on page 8)

## Many Shall Come in My Name

Matthew 24:5 and 24:24 Compared

By Curtis Pugh  
of Poteau, Oklahoma

For many years this preacher has been bothered by what seems to be an anomaly in Matthew chapter twenty-four. By anomaly is meant something abnormal, peculiar, and different from the normal or usual. That different thing, that abnormality, if you



please, is this: there appears in this chapter to be the same sign given twice, once for that period of time called by the Lord

Jesus, "the beginning of sorrows"

◊ (Continued on page 6)

## Know God and Live Forever

By Rosco Brong  
(1908 - 1985)

Life and Knowledge Begun Here  
Will Grow and Be  
Perfect Hereafter

"This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

"Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and



Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18).

Everlasting life will last forever. It will last forever because of its quality, not its

quantity. It is life of such quality that it knows and desires to know

◊ (Continued on page 7)

## Forgiveness

By Timothy J. Hille  
of Ashland, Illinois

Matthew 18:21-35

I think at all times we must ever be reminding ourselves that the word "forgive" has the word "gift" in it. The forgiveness we have received of God was a manifestation of His grace and mercy, which are rooted in His



love – "for God is love" (I John 4:8).

The teaching of Christ before us at this time is in perfect harmony with His previous

teachings (Matt. 5:21-26). The

◊ (Continued on page 11)

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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.

## What Are We

(Continued from page 1) ♦

I remember sermons preached before from my father about the successful mission of Jesus Christ. How that the Lord came into this world as Emmanuel (God with us!) to accomplish the will of the Father, as our text verse above puts it. He came to die for sinners, He came to substitute Himself as the atonement of the elect of God, and He came to live a perfect life that could be imputed upon those loved before the foundation of the earth. Really, it is marvelous to see how Christ fulfilled every prophecy, picture, and commandment of the law of God. Selah! Think about it!

What I would like to glean from His wondrous life for today's thoughts, is the fact of how selfless was this sacrificial life. **"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."** There at the Garden of Gethsemene, that selfless desire to accomplish the purposes of the Father that had sent Him unto this work, despite the great cost to Him personally is vividly portrayed in Luke 22:42-44, **"Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."** A complete study of Isaiah 53 is necessary to see the ultimate price paid by our faithful Saviour and His perfect obedience to that call to service. Vs. 3-5, **"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely**

**he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."**

When we examine the life of Jesus Christ it is purely a life that is meant for service. **"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"** (Matt. 20:28). I know that Christ was not created for this purpose. He is God the Son! It was not "robbery" for Him to be called God, but He submitted Himself for an allotted amount of "time" unto this great call to become 100% human and subject Himself to the indignities of the world and its flesh. And thereby the Father is glorified. **"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"** (Phil. 2:6-11). That is the last and ultimate phrase of this expansive passage. To God be the glory. Selah! Think about it!

**CREATED FOR HIS PURPOSES**

So, what about us? Certainly we

♦ (Continued on page 3)

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# What Are We

(Continued from page 2) ♦

are indeed created beings. What for? Why did God create Adam and Eve? As we start to study the answer for them, I want to make sure that the beloved reader knows that we were created IN Adam. The Bible phrases this inherent knowledge of posterity, thusly: **"And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him"** (Heb. 7:9-10). In this particular passage, Jacob's son Levi (Abraham's great-grandson) payed tithes to Melchisedec, as surely as Abraham did. And in Adam, we all died. **"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"** (I Cor. 15:22).

Perhaps I did not make that point as clearly as I ought, but what I am saying is that God created Me and YOU on the sixth day when He created our parents, Adam and Eve. Why did He create them? Important question, but even more pertinent to us, why did He create US?

If I may infer from our text in John 6:38, **"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."** Could that be our purpose, as well? Were we created to do the will of Him that created us? I think very surely that is going to be the answer. How could it not be? Every question as to our existence must come back to the One that propelled us into existence. Why did you make us, God?

If God sent His only begotten Son to this earth for the sole purpose of executing His perfect will, then I firmly believe the Bible shows that our mission is the same. We are here for the sole purpose of executing the will of

our Creator, our Heavenly Father, God Almighty. **"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. ...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth"** (Gen. 2:15, 1:27-28). These positive commandments would fill the days and nights, the years and immortal ages of Adam and Eve without question. The one negative commandment given them, though, was one that also required strict obedience. **"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"** (Gen. 2:16-17).

What is required penultimately of man (you and I) is obedience. Solomon sums this up nicely in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, **"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."** Whatsoever we do on this Earth of God's creation, this is ultimately our greatest charge. **"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives,**

## Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of  
Plant City, Florida



### The New Birth #14 Evidences of Having Been Born Again—Part 7

**"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments"** (I John 5:2). Previously we noted that those who are born again have a supernatural love for the brethren. Now we are told that we may discern whether or not we have that super-natural love by two things: loving God and keeping His commandments! By keeping God's commandments we evidence that we love God and the brethren—thus evidencing our new birth! Jesus said, **"If ye love me, keep my commandments"** (John 14:15); **"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you"**

(John 15:14). Furthermore, we read in I John 1:3-5, **"And by this we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whosoever keepeth his word, in him truly is the love of God perfected; by this know we that we are in him."** Therefore, we must ask ourselves this question: Am I keeping God's commandments? Do I know what His commandments are? It is by keeping His commandments that we ascertain whether or not we love the Lord and the brethren; and it is in loving the Lord and the brethren we evidence that we have been born-again. Have you been born-again?

**and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord"** (Col. 3:17-20). The Bible gives detailed instructions, even in particular, wives, submit! Husbands, love! Children, obey! Whatsoever ye do: do it for the Glory of God! Remember Philippians 2:5, **"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."** Be obedient, just like Christ. Selah! Think about it!

So, if we are here primarily and initially to do the will of our Father, then our focus on life might be changed a bit, eh? The jobs or careers we have are only important to do as we do them for the glory of God, and as we utilize the resources that God has given us, to

accomplish the purposes of God in our lives. The families and friends we have, by God's graciousness, are also only important as we turn our motives and desires toward them unto a godly endeavor to see God's glorious will accomplished. Selah! Think about it!

Our house, our cars, our iPhones, our pets, our yards, our neighbors, our jobs, our families, our churches, our nations are all to be subject to these absolute conditions of being surrendered unto our God!. Right? Was not that the prayer of Jesus Christ, our Example? Following this line of thought, can we really even claim our possessions, as our own? David the King, did not. **"Wherefore David blessed the LORD before**

♦ (Continued on page 4)

# What Are We

(Continued from page 3) ♦

**all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee" (I Chro. 29:10-14).**

So, in the end, do we really have any possessions in this Earth? **"Lay up treasures...in Heaven"** we are exhorted, eh? Do not put down roots in this pilgrimage, Gehazi. Do not look back, always look forward, Mrs. Lot. Our possessions then, we must conclude, are never really for ourselves. Even the food on our plate (mine!) is just that we might nourish our bodies, so we can continue serving our God and family.

Now, that was an important addition that I added to the last sentence. As we serve God, we will along the way be a blessing to others, at least if we serve God correctly. **"...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang**

**all the law and the prophets"** (Matt. 22:37-40). As selfless as was the life of Christ, so should our goal be to serve the Lord and be a blessing to all that we come into contact with in the world.

## 1. WHEN THINGS GO WRONG?

With those realizations as our base, I want to Selah! Think about it! one more step. What about when things go wrong in our life? The beloved reader surely knows what I mean by that statement. That is when you swing the hammer and hit your "thumbnail" instead of the "steel nail!" When you are late for work, and you get caught behind that slow coal truck. When your best friend betrays you. When the doctor calls and tells you that you have that dreaded disease. When everything seemed just fine and something happens to turn your world upside down.

My question for this article, that we might ask ourselves at this poignant time of impending disaster is: "Who is it going 'wrong' for?" Me? Family? Neighbors down the street? Is it going "wrong" for God?

Hey, that jolted you, did it not? It sure did me, as I was preparing this message. Hey, nothing goes "wrong" with our sovereign God in complete and total control of both the universe and my life. If something is happening in our life that we might perceive as "wrong," then we must be looking at it "wrong." Remember Romans 8:28, **"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."** Not just "some things" or even "most things," but **"all things"** work out good for God's chosen people. Always! Right?

The crucifixion on the cross at Calvary was certainly a very

bad thing for Jesus Christ to have to suffer through, but what a wondrous, though terrible event it was. It was necessary to accomplish the will of the Father, was it not? So there goes our noble and altruistic Saviour divine. Though it cost Him degradations, humiliations, untold agony and ultimate anguish He did not say, "Boy, it seems like everything is going wrong today!" **"All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet..."** (Matt. 21:4). He said instead, **"...Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him"** (Matt. 3:15).

No matter what phone call we receive, what bombshell is dropped on our doorstep, if we are truly "all in" in our service to our omniscient God, then we must realize that our God has a purpose for us today. This day is (also) what we were created for. Every day! We must realize that even the bad days where things go "wrong;" events are completely in God's control and that actually things are not going wrong at all. They are being carefully manipulated by the Architect of our lives to work out "good things" in our character, nature and ambiance. You see, if we are indeed created by God to serve Him in this world, then many of our actions will be for the "good" of others, at the cost of deprivation to ourselves. We might go hungry, that others may be filled. We might suffer pain, that others might escape punishment. We might effect the "mistake," that others might learn to avoid that damage. Are we willing to do that? Accept the responsibility that God lays upon us in these times of peril and/or shame?

## 2. WE ARE GOD'S GIFT TO

## THIS TROUBLED WORLD

Summatively, we are created as a gift unto this world. Surely the primary gift is seen in John 3:16, **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."** Why in the world would we accept that Christ must come to suffer, be hungry, weary, thirsty, maligned, homeless, and rejected, but never consider that the lot of the Master should be the lot of the servant or disciple? **"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you"** (John 15:18). **"The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord"** (Matt. 10:24).

For a God-known specific amount of time, we are sent into this world, following our Master; to influence a God-known specific number of people. And everything that happens along the way, is going to further that cause of being a God-sent gift to these people. No, it did not go "wrong" for God, or for you. God meant for that to happen. To teach us? Maybe. To remind us? Probably. To turn us back toward what is really important? Certainly. **"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). What a powerful verse. God has already ordained the **"good works"** we were created for. Our purpose in life is not the carnal, fleshly desires and sentiments of the world. We were created to serve; to be a slave for God and our neighbors. **"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"** (Mark 16:15).

A member of our church told me of a co-worker of his that was

♦ (Continued on page 5)

# What Are We

(Continued from page 4) ◊

unsaved. His wife had suffered through a painful battle with cancer. She was only given a year or two, but had fought it for much longer. As is the case in these matters, though, it was eventually a battle that she lost. The embittered husband responded to the member's attempts to comfort him through the power of God's Word with a terrible blasphemous reply, "I wish God would get cancer!" As shocking as the words were, the Lord gave our dear brother an answer that the Holy Spirit used to good effect, as he pointed out that the Lord had given him and his wife more years of love together than most victims of this cancer ever had. And beyond that, had saved the wife, by revealing Jesus Christ to her during those dark, yet necessary years. The lost man seemed struck by the words, and admitted the truth in them. What a witness! What an undeniably precious gift.

"I wish God would get cancer!" As I thought on those despairingly, sacrilegious words, I thought of how often, the Lord takes such words and makes them true. You know, beloved reader, God, the Son did get cancer during those terrible three hours on the cross when He took the sins of the world upon His holy and precious self. **"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses"** (Matt. 8:17). **"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"** (John 8:36). **"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"** (II Cor. 5:21). Selah! Think about it!

When things seem like they are going wrong, we have the opportunity to do a reality check. Instead of blaming God, (Job 2:9, **"Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die."**), look upward and grab hold of the promises of God. **"But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"** ...he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" ...For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 2:10, 23:10, 19:25-27).

Some folk, like Mrs. Job, (and me sometimes!) tend to think things are going wrong and God is not doing anything about it. If we allow that feeling to persist, we will end up angry with everything in our life, including God. I told a sister one time in such a depressing funk, that she needed to forgive God. She knew that God was in control, but she could not help but feel that she was being persecuted and was always receiving the short end of the stick. "It is not fair!" we so often cry out. Well, it depends on what is really fair, I suppose. Was it "fair" that Christ must take my place in eternal Hell? Is it "fair" that He purchased an eternity of bliss for me in Heaven, while others with sins just like mine are bound for eternal damnation in Hell? Selah! Think about it! Do not hold a grudge against God that others are seemingly doing better than you. God loves you,

dear saint. He gives you the best He has, every day. Anything less would be unworthy of Him.

Beloved reader, we are created to serve. The good things are promised certainly for the future, but not necessarily for now. **"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable"** (I Cor. 15:19). **"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth"** (Heb. 11:13). We are not here to live a life of luxury, or even of middle-class exigencies. We are here to glorify the One that created us and Who places us exactly where we are, from day-to-day.

## 3. THE LOST PERSON'S GREATEST SIN

**"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day"** (Deut. 11:26-28). Not just a lost person, but Christians are guilty of this greatest sin: living their lives for themselves. When we live our lives for ourselves, we rob God of the glory due His workmanship in our lives. We deny the very purpose we were created for. It is the most selfish of acts, to take time for ourselves, to the exclusion of God. Choose ye this day whether you will serve God, or no. **"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"** (Matt. 5:16).

Not only are we robbing God when we do not live a sacrificial

life on His behalf, but we are also denying our compatriots in this life a true witness of the truth. That newborn child God has given you? You are responsible to be a witness unto the glory of God to them every day. If our friends do not see Christ Jesus our Master in our actions, words, and lifestyle, then we have failed them. Our neighbors need to know the hope of Christ, or their lives will be totally wasted and in vain. **"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing"** (II Tim. 4:2-8). Do you anticipate His appearing? Are you living your life today, moaning and groaning about circumstances God has allowed to pass your way? Or are you excited to be able to be His witness (Greek for Martyr) today? May His glorious rapture find God's people doing what we were created to do; sacrificially, doing the will of our Father. Selah! Think about it!



# Many Shall Come

(Continued from page 1) ♦

and given again for that period He indicated shall be **“great tribulation.”** This is most unusual, and in fact, confusing. How is the reader to know by this sign what period of time he is in or reading about since the same sign is given twice?: or so it appears. And after all, the intention of the Lord Jesus was not to confuse, but to instruct and make clear. The fact that the Lord Jesus intended to make clear what He was talking about is seen in that **“the disciples came unto him privately,”** (Matt. 24:3) on the Mount of Olives and questioned Him about the future. He was not speaking in parables which have a twofold intent – to teach some and hide the truth to others (see Matthew 13:13ff). He was answering questions put to Him in private by His disciples.

The first portion of Scripture which commentators generally say has to do with false Christs is as follows: **“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows”** (Matt. 24:4-8). As previously stated, the events predicted by the Lord Jesus in this passage occur in that period of time He called **“the beginning of sorrows.”** That we who are alive at this present time are actually in this period of time seems obvious. Except for one thing: where are

those claiming to be Christ, if the clause **“For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ”** means that false christs shall arise. Do you know about **“many”** claiming **“I am Christ?”** This preacher has not heard or read of such individuals. But we do hear of wars and rumors of wars. We most certainly do see nation rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom. By the way, the Greek word translated **“nation”** here is **“ethnos”** from which our English word **“ethnic”** comes. The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines the word ethnic thus: **“of or relating to races or large groups of people who have the same customs, religion, origin, etc.”** We are certainly seeing **“nation”** or ethnic groups rising against others around the world at this time. And diverse places in this world are experiencing earthquakes. Famines and diseases are almost daily in the news due to their increase in various places.

All the signs for this time period fit our own time except this one. We do not have **“many”** coming in Jesus’ name claiming to be the Messiah. And why would they come in the name of the historical Jesus claiming to be the Messiah or the Anointed when He was proven to be? Do you see why this preacher is bothered?

Further on in the Lord’s private answer to His disciples He speaks of another block of time called the time of **“great tribulation.”** The signs of that time are given in the following portion: **“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo,**

**here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be”** (Matt. 24:21-27).

There is no doubt: this is the time of Jacob’s trouble prophesied in Jeremiah 30:7 as follows: **“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.”** The Lord Jesus said about this period of time that **“then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”** In other words He said it is the worst time ever. Jeremiah said **“none is like it.”** They must have spoken about the same period of time: that time when God shall deal once again with Israel and by His actions bring them to Himself.

We could say much more about this time period, but let us pass on to that phrase which interests us: **“there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”** Do not let the word **“elect”** here confuse the issue. God has had His elect people in every age and shall have during the great tribulation. The statement just quoted is clear and definite. During the great tribulation false Christs and false prophets will work miracles and show signs

so great that the non-elect will certainly be deceived. The world is no doubt being prepared for that time even now as many people erroneously believe that miracle workers are from God. They cite the words of Nicodemus who said, **“...we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him”** (John 3:2). This preacher is convinced that these are the words of Nicodemus. The Bible clearly says so. As such they express the opinion of Nicodemus which may or may not be true. Since false Christs and false prophets will be able to work great miracles and signs – and since in the latter days an image shall be made to speak, we conclude that the words of Nicodemus are not true at all. The devil and his crowd can at times work miracles.

So we may conclude that the tribulation period will have false Christs deceiving people. These false Christs are not at this time present in the **“beginning of sorrows”** - the time period that we at this present time find ourselves. What is the answer? Was the Lord Jesus wrong? Of course that cannot be. The problem is our understanding. Either we are not in the **“beginning of sorrows,”** or we do not have the correct understanding of what Jesus meant.

Jeremiah tells us what Jehovah said about false prophets: **“Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart”** (Jer. 14:14). Notice this phrase: **“The prophets prophesy**

♦ (Continued on page 7)



# Many Shall Come

(Continued from page 6) ♦

**lies in my name."** To do something in the name of another is to do it with that other person's authority. Legally it is to have a power of attorney. It requires willingness on the part of the person with authority to have another act in his stead. False prophets do not have Christ's or God's authority, but they claim to have it. They are liars, for God said they **"prophecy lies in my name."**

Let us leave the time of **"great tribulation"** and go back to what He said about our own time, **"the beginning of sorrows."** Consider what the Lord Jesus actually said. He said: **"For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many."** Remember, punctuation, as well as chapter and verse divisions were not in the original texts of our Bibles. Our King James Bibles have been updated on spelling and punctuation down through the years. In fact the punctuation of this verse in my original 1611 King James Bible is this **"For many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ: and shall deceive many."** I call your attention to the colon after the word Christ whereas in my 1769 Blayney King James has a semi-colon. (The 1769 Blayney revision is the King James Bible that nearly all use identifying it only as a King James Bible.) What if we remove a comma: just one comma. What if Jesus actually said, "For many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ; and shall deceive many." Do you see the difference in meaning?

Now I must warn you at this juncture: no commentator that I have found sees what I am saying here. Reader, you must pray and seek the Lord about this, but it

seems to me that the Lord said this: (1) many shall come claiming to be speaking in my name; (2) they shall say that I, Jesus, am the Christ, the Savior, the Messiah, etc.; but (3) they shall deceive many.

Does this understanding of the Lord's statement fit our times? Are there many preachers and teachers filling pulpits, preaching on the radio and on TV all claiming to have Christ's authority to preach? And are not most of them teaching damnable heresy? Do not many of them teach baptismal regeneration? Do not most of them teach decisional regeneration? In other words do not most of them teach works for salvation? Are not the devotees of such damnable lies, whether teachers or followers, those spoken of in II Timothy 3:13 which specifically says: **"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."**

If the things I have presented in this article are true and my understanding is correct, we should not be looking for men to arise who claim that they, themselves, are Christ. (And we do not see such in this **"beginning of sorrows"**). Rather we should look for men who are boldly claiming that Jesus is the Christ, but who deceive by preaching a false gospel and other lies. But when we look forward to the tribulation period then shall arise men claiming to be the Christ, the Deliverer, who shall provide salvation to those who believe their lies and follow them.

Thus, by taking this view we have no confusion. There are not two instances of the same sign being given. We have no anomaly or abnormality in the Scriptures at all. We are not confused by what the Lord Jesus said. We have

two distinct signs given for two different periods of time. And indeed we are seeing the first sign – men claiming that Jesus is the Christ – but yet who are deceivers and teachers of damnable heresies. God's Word is true and is being fulfilled before our very eyes if we understand the Bible aright.



## Know God and Live

(Continued from page 1) ♦

God, and if it knows God at all it must know Him more and more. The quality of eternal life appears in the knowledge of God; its quantity is the measure of this knowledge.

### The Question

It is possible, therefore, to know whether or not you have eternal life. The question is, Do you know God? If you know God, you have eternal life. Jesus said so. But you can know Him only in Christ. Jesus said this, too.

**"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by (through) me"** (John 14:6).

The question is not whether or how much you know about God. Do you know Him?

You may know all that theologians say about God; you may even know all that the Bible says about God; you may have read and even memorized the whole Bible from the first verse of Genesis to the last of Revelation. But---do you personally know the God of the Bible?

### In Regeneration

First of all, do you know God in the experience of the new birth? Jesus rebuked Nicodemus, **"a master of Israel,"** for not knowing these things (John 3:3-10).

Jeremiah had described this work of God among His people

under the new covenant as follows:

**"I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more"** (Jer. 31:33-34).

### Spiritual Ignorance

Only the fool has said in his heart, **"There is no God."** But it is one thing to have enough natural intelligence to know that there is a God and another thing to have a spiritual mind to know God. **"Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge"** (Psalm 14:1-4)?

However much of natural knowledge lost souls may learn, they are still in spiritual ignorance if they do not know spiritually the true and living God. **"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent"** (Acts 17:30).

Not all who claim to know God really do. Of some we read: **"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate"** (Titus 1:16).

Only when we believe the testimony of Jesus Christ and come to Him personally in the new birth do we get to know Him and thus have eternal life. Then we can say in a spiritual sense what some Samaritan believers said to the woman who met Jesus at Jacob's well:

**"Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard**

♦ (Continued on page 8)

# Know God and Live

(Continued from page 7) ♦

**him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world**" (John 4:42).

## A Keeper

If you really know God in the new birth as your Saviour, do you know Him also as your Keeper (Psalm 121:5)?

How Satan must dance with glee when he succeeds in getting regenerate souls to doubt the keeping grace of our Lord! How little do we know our God if we can imagine that He would start a salvation which He cannot finish, or that He could fail to keep His word!

Are you really trusting Christ to save us if we cannot trust Him to keep us? What kind of "salvation" is it that is here today and gone tomorrow? If we cannot believe Jesus' word that as true believers we have eternal life, shall not come into condemnation, and shall never perish (John 5:24; 10:28; etc.), how can we believe anything He says? Paul happily expressed the confidence of the true believer who knows not only the saving but also the keeping power of God:

**"I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day"** (II Tim. 1:12).

## Teacher and Guide

**"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be**

**in you"** (John 14:15-17).

Do you know God the Holy Spirit as your personal Teacher and Guide? To true believers John wrote:

**"Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. . . The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him"** (I John 2:20-27).

Do you know Him as Guide? Does He lead you? **"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God"** (Rom. 8:14).

## A Faithful Father

Do you know Him as your heavenly Father Who loves you too much to allow you to go on in sin?

**"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? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons"** (Heb. 12:6-8).

Those miserable souls who imagine that Christians can continue in sin with impunity need to get acquainted with the God of the Bible. Whatever your pretensions, the Bible says plainly that if you are without chastisement you are no child of God. How well do you know Him as the loving Father Who visits your transgression with the rod, and your iniquity with stripes (Psalm 89:32)?

## In Resurrection Power

Finally, do you know Him in something of that mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead (Eph. 1:17-20; Rom. 6:1-11; 8:11)?

Little or much as we may know God now, our present knowledge is partial at best: **"We know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. . . now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known"** (I Cor. 13:9-12).

If you know God in the new birth, if you know Him as the good Shepherd Who keeps His sheep so that not one of them will be lost, if you know Him as your Comforter, Teacher, and Guide in the person of the Holy Spirit, if you know Him as your heavenly Father and have felt His rod when you turned your back upon Him--then let us join in the inspired words of the prophet:

**"Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten; and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth"** (Hosea 6:1-3).

Because in some measure he knew **"the only true God"** Paul could write (and if we know the same God we can echo his words as our own):

**"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of**

**Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead"** (Phil. 3:7-11).



## A Lamp Unto

(Continued from page 1) ♦

inadequate condition before God. In fact, I think this is something the Word of God does in the case of every man. That is, the Word of God proclaims all men as sinners. Romans 3:23 says, **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."** All men are dirty and vile and despicable before God, because all men are sinners. Quite simply, "our feet are dirty." Even a man such as Job, a man that is considered upright and righteous, would look to the Lord and say, **"Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth"** (Job. 40:4).

So, if we want to think about the Word of God and how that Word is a lamp unto our feet, I think we must begin with this observation that "our feet are dirty." But, how do we know that our feet are dirty? Well, we know it by the Word of God. We have already noticed a couple of examples and there are many more passages in the Scriptures that teach us of the

♦ (Continued on page 9)



# A Lamp Unto

(Continued from page 8) ♦

depravity of man, if only we had time to turn to them. The Word of God shines a light upon our feet, and shows us our own depravity, and our own failures, and our own filthiness.

What hope do we have? Or, we might say, once the Word of God has performed the operation of a “lamp unto our feet” to show us our own filthiness, what then? The Word of God shows us the salvation that lies in Jesus Christ, and the cleansing and the saving that is accomplished through and by Him alone. The Word of God shows us that we are unclean, and that we cannot clean ourselves: **“For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD”** (Jer. 2:22).

It is true of all men, that we are of a despicable nature, and cannot be tolerated in the presence of God due to our own filthiness. **“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away”** (Isa. 64:6). But, the Lord reveals unto us that cleansing, a new life, a new garment, and a new standing before God are accomplished for us in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This is pictured in the Old Testament in the example of the high priest Joshua, in the time of the return of the captivity of Israel: **“And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment”** (Zech. 3:4). The Lord can (and will) pro-

vide His people with a change of raiment. He can (and will) cleanse us and make us whole and acceptable in the sight of God Almighty! **“Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all”** (John 13:10).

Let me refer you to another example in the New Testament, during the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. **“When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them”** (Matt. 8:1-4). In the Scriptures, the disease of leprosy is often a picture of sin and defilement. In the example we have before us, the Lord Jesus did cleanse this man of his leprosy. Who can do this but Jesus Christ? And, who can cleanse from sins except our blessed Lord? And, this wonderful Saviour is revealed to us in the Word of God.

## OUR FEET WILL STUMBLE

Humanly speaking, we know that no man is able to follow after the Lord, and that all men will fail in their endeavors to save themselves. We know that “our feet will stumble” if we are left to our own devices. We read about the plight of man in Isaiah 59:9-10, **“Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope**

**for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.”** Though we might think that we are good and worthy in ourselves; and though we might do some things which others might approve of; still, in the end, we are only blind, groping, and stumbling as we look for repentance and salvation. The Word of God shows us this fact.

But, it is also true that even those who are saved will stumble from time to time. Let us use the apostle Peter as an example: When the Lord told the apostles about His imminent death, we read the following account: **“And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men”** (Mark 8:32-33). Just after Peter makes one of the best recorded New Testament confessions as to the deity of Jesus Christ, he then goes on to stumble, and misspeak as the Lord prophesies of His coming sacrifice on behalf of men. Here, in the verses we have just read, Peter spoke out against the will and purpose of God, and the Lord Jesus rebuked him before all. There is no doubt that Peter did “stumble” here, and he did not follow the Lord in faith. Later on, as we all are aware, the Apostle Peter would thrice deny that he even knew the Lord Jesus Christ.

And yet, some years later, when speaking about the church in Jerusalem, Paul would say of Peter that he was one of the “pillars” of the church (See Galatians 2:9). How could this be? As the Word of God will tell us – and even as

the example of Peter’s life shows us, it is inevitable but that we will stumble from time to time. But, the Word of God is always available to encourage us and to lift us up. And, the Lord will restore us as He sees fit.

The Word of God promises us that God will give us the courage to stand, and the understanding to know the way that we should go. We read in Proverbs 4:10-13, **“Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.”** I believe, the more that we depend upon the Word of God as “a lamp unto our feet,” the more we shall stand firm, and “our feet will not stumble.”

## OUR FEET WILL GROW SORE

The life of a Christian is not an easy life. We have just noticed that there is a tendency to stumble – even in the lives of those who are saved. There are many difficulties, temptations, pains, and sorrows that will surround our lives here on earth. The Word of God reveals to us that there are obstacles which will confront us, and that we will, at times, face the possibility of being injured, or hurt in the cause of Christ. We read the words of the Lord Jesus in Mark 13:9, **“But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.”** Surely, there will be times when “our feet will grow sore.” Surely, the world

♦ (Continued on page 10)

# A Lamp Unto

(Continued from page 9) ♦

will rejoice to cause the Christian to hurt, be injured, or to be sore. This can be physical pain and suffering; or, this can be spiritual pain that the world will pour out upon us.

In the Old Testament we read about the sad situation of the children of Israel: **“When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me. Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities? The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered”** (Jer 8:18-22)? This situation is comparable to that of the Christian people of today. Yes, we too sorrow and are **“hurt;”** we, too, long for the healing presence of that **“balm in Gilead.”** From time to time this life will leave us wounded, hurt, or sore. The world can bring us sorrow and woe. Though we trust in God, we must still undergo many trials and troubles in this life. We can see the sad condition of the world, and we can not help but notice the terrible plight of the godless and the unsaved amongst whom we live. Because of all of these things, it is difficult for the Christian to always be happy and joyful in the flesh even though we have joy and peace in the spirit.

Thankfully, the blessed Word of God reveals to us that Jesus

Christ is our Healer, and He is our **“Balm of Gilead!”** The Lord Jesus Christ, during His earthly ministry, took upon Him this duty that was prophesied of in the book of Isaiah. We read about this in Luke 4:17-21, **“And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”** Are your feet sore as you travel the road of life? Are you in pain due to the difficulties which confront you as a child of God? Are you injured? Are you sick of sin and the pain and the cost of it? Well, turn to Jesus! Perhaps the words of the Lord in Matthew 8:7 can apply to you as well: **“..I will come and heal him.”** Remember, the Word of God is there to help you when your **“feet are sore.”**

## OUR FEET WILL GROW WEARY

We are mortal beings. And, we are spiritual beings. Speaking from either perspective, it is evident that we will grow weary as we follow the Lord God. The Scriptures are plain in teaching this fact. David said, **“I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of**

**grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies”** (Ps. 6:6-7). Just as David, we, too, will grow weary with groaning. This world and the duties laid upon us, may grow heavy from time to time. We will find that our energy, sometimes, is spent. We will find that our zeal, sometimes, is used up. Just as David, we, too, may find that **“our feet will grow weary.”** Samuel Medley wrote,

*“Weary of earth, myself, and sin,  
Dear Jesus set me free,  
And to thy glory take me in,  
For there I long to be.”*

It is at these times that we rely on our God, and on His Word, to give us sight to see, and strength to stand. We read the words of David again in II Samuel 22:29-31, **“For thou art my lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will lighten my darkness. For by thee I have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall. As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.”** David found strength and (really) superhuman ability in the **“word of the LORD.”** David **“tried”** that **“word”** and found it to be strong. The Word of God, and His commandments were the source that David turned to whenever he was weary, whenever sin afflicted him, and whenever his foes would rise up against him. David accomplished things in his life that men ought not be able to do. David demonstrated faithfulness, perseverance, and a love for God that is nearly unparalleled in human history. And yet, we know that what strengths and abilities he showed in his life were all because of the power, the strength, and the faithfulness of the God Whom he served.

I want you to know, that the same God who was David's God, is our God! The same Word that

was David's relief, is also our relief! Paul exhorted the Galatians this way: **“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not”** (Gal. 6:9). If we will trust in what the Lord has promised us, then we can find strength in obeying Him and His Word. The tiredness will dissipate, as we look to God and His Word. The weariness will evaporate, as we gather strength from God.

Do you want power and strength? Do you want relief for the weariness of your feet? Turn unto the Lord God and the promises, the strength, and the power that are found in His blessed Word. We read in Mark 12:24, **“And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?”** This might seem like an odd verse to make reference to, but I want to make a point about what the Lord Jesus is saying to these Saducees: We can say that they did not know the Scriptures, neither did they know the power of God. In other words, when they missed one, they missed the other. However, if one does know the Scriptures, then one does also know the power of God. Do you see what I mean? The Saducees were bereft of the **“power of God”** because they did not really know **“the scriptures.”** Conversely, they could not really know **“the scriptures”** without that God making known the Scriptures through His **“power.”** So, it is apparent that the Scriptures and power of God are inseparable. He has placed His power in His Word. If we know the Scriptures, we know the power of God. If we will spend time in His Word, we will be rejuvenated by the power of God which is found in His Word.

♦ (Continued on page 11)

# A Lamp Unto

(Continued from page 10) ♦

Take comfort in these famous words which are found in Isaiah 40:28-31, **“Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”** Though your feet, mind, and very soul might be weary, there is strength and power and renewal of mind in the Word of God.

## OUR FEET WILL CONTINUE INTO HEAVEN

We have already noticed how the Word of God is “a Lamp unto our feet” in that the Word is there for us to light our way when our feet might “be dirty,” when our feet might “stumble,” when our feet might “be sore,” and when our feet might “be weary.” But, before we close, let me draw one more conclusion concerning the Word of God and how it is “a lamp unto our feet.” Once the Word of God has been revealed to us as the light of God; and once the Word of God has shown us our own needs, and revealed to us our Cleanser, Guide, Healer, and Strength; then, we know that the Word of God will guide us into Heaven. Now, as we experience the blessings of the Word of God, we know that “our feet will continue into heaven.”

We read in Proverbs 4:18, **“But the path of the just is as**

**the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”** Praise the Lord! Now this blessed Word of God which is the “lamp unto our feet” will shine brighter and brighter until such day as we are taken to be with the Lord in Heaven. What a confidence and joy it is. O, how bright this light does shine in this life. O, how much brighter might it shine in Heaven. **“The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out”** (Prov. 13:9). Rejoice with me in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Rejoice with me in the wonders and the praises of what Christ has done for me and for you.

Let me close by quoting the following hymn, written by Joseph Hart in the mid 1700's:

*Say, Christian, would'st thou thrive  
In knowledge of thy Lord?  
Against no Scripture ever strive,  
But tremble at his word.  
Revere the sacred page;  
To injure any part  
Betrays, with blind and feeble rage,  
A hard and haughty heart.  
If aught there dark appear,  
Bewail thy want of sight;  
No imperfection can be there,  
For all God's words are right.  
The Scriptures and the Lord  
Bear one tremendous name;  
The written and the incarnate Word  
In all things are the same.*



## Forgiveness

(Continued from page 1) ♦

maintenance of brotherly love and fellowship is counted as an utmost priority with our Lord and King. It is one of the laws of His kingdom. To defy this law is to defy His kingship, His authority, and to practice treason and rebellion and enmity against

His throne and government. The devil, who is the ultimate sower of discord among the brethren, is always at work (Prov. 6:16-19). He works through offences. The man who offends is at best a pawn of the devil, and at worst, an ally of the wicked one. If we cause an offence, then we have played the part of the enemy.

In our lesson, the servant was found to be working against the interests of his lord and master. To be a servant and run up an indebtedness of so high a price is certainly not the work of love. Whether it was the fault of incompetence, laziness, or willful negligence, the result was the same – he owed a great sum – one has estimated that it was in the millions of dollars as we count money – and he was unable to pay. Sin will always cause a debt you cannot pay. Sin will always cause an injury you cannot heal. Sin will always bring you into trouble from which you alone cannot extricate yourself. The well-known adage, and true it is, is that sin will take you farther than you intended to go; keep you longer than you intended to stay; and cost you more than you intended to pay.

Remember that Jesus is teaching those who are called disciples. These have claimed Him as Lord and Master, made Jehovah their banner, and confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, both by lip and public profession of the watery grave of baptism. They have been following Him wheresoever He went. He tells them that it shall go hard with them if they violate the ruling precept of His kingdom. We have been reconciled to God – let us therefore be reconciled one to another. God has forgiven us; let us therefore forgive one another. Otherwise, we are working in

opposition to His rule as King.

Sad, is it not, that one who had been forgiven so much would think it hard to forgive another who owes him or her so little! That which God has forgiven us, our sins, comes to an incalculable sum – we cannot add it up and arrive at the total owed, because that which it cost that we might be free of it was the life and blood of the precious Son of God, the Prince of life! There is no other estimation than that which Scripture appends to it: **“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift”** (II Cor. 9:15). If we forget what God has done for us, there is no telling what we might do to others! When David forgot all that God had done for him, he murdered one of his own mighty men – a man who had risked his life for king and country who knows how many times, and whose love toward his brother soldiers was so great that he would not even sleep in the comforts of his own house while they were away on the battlefield fighting for their king – and stole his wife. Oh, how dreadful the sin we may commit when we forget the great immeasurable forgiveness which we have received of God on account of the precious shed blood of His only begotten Son! We are not above it, beloved! Let us beware! Remember the previous lessons in this great chapter – the only preventive against offending is humility! The only remedy once an offence has occurred is by way of humility!

Our forgiveness from God is a free grant of mercy and tenderhearted compassion! If ever we begin to think that there is ought in our standing justified and free in the sight of God that is owing to anything but His free, infinite, sovereign, and amazing

♦ (Continued on page 15)

## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

*Submit your questions on any Bible topic.*

1. To what Scripture is Christ referencing in John 17:12 that **"might be fulfilled?"**

Matthew Stepp  
286 Big Creek Road  
Wayne, WV 25570

Pastor  
Big Creek  
Baptist Church  
286 Big Creek Road  
Wayne, WV 25570



**"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled"** (John 17:12). There are two prophecies and Scriptural truths that are fulfilled in this marvelous verse. Selah! Think about it!

The first promise/prophecy being fulfilled in our text is that "all of God's elect are kept and preserved in Jesus Christ." **"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day"** (John 6:37-40).

This precious truth of particular redemption and irresistible grace is found throughout the Old Testament. (Deut. 30:6; Lev. 26:44-45; Isa. 53:11; Jer. 24:6-7; 31:33-34; 32:36-42; Ezek. 11:16-

20; 37:21-28; Zech. 8:3-8; etc). Christ, during this high priestly prayer in John 17, is telling the Father that **"...those that Thou gavest Me, I have kept, and none of them is lost..."** Surely this is fulfilled in the cross of Jesus Christ. Salvation is based upon the merit of the blood of Jesus, and all are kept in His person. **"...begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time"** (I Peter 1:3-5).

The second prophecy fulfilled concerns the son of perdition. None of the children of God will ever be lost, but Judas Iscariot, the son of perdition is lost and was revealed to be a wolf in sheep's clothing. **"But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him"** (John 6:64). **"..Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth"** (John 8:44).

Some Old Testament prophecies fulfilled concerning Judas are found in the Messianic Psalm 69. Matthew 27:34 locks this passage in with the crucifixion: **"They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink"** (Ps. 69:21). As David continues to prophesy against the perpetrators

of that evil day for the Jews, he comes to Judas Iscariot's personal prophecies. **"Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded...Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous"** (Ps. 69:25-28).

Peter quotes the 25<sup>th</sup> verse in Acts 1:20, **"For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take."** He adds also the pertinent information found in Psalm 109:8, **"Let his days be few; and let another take his office."** Read the context of this Psalm for more startling information about this Satan-infused, son of perdition (cf: John 13:27).

The 26<sup>th</sup> verse is in collaboration with the prophesy in Isaiah 53. **"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted"** (Isa. 53:4). **"..Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief..."** (Isa. 53:10). Which was certainly fulfilled at Golgotha.

The prophetic verse that most perfectly parallels our text passage in John 17:12 is Psalm 69:28, **"Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous," "...and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition..."** He is not written in that Book (Rev. 13:8)!

Judas, the son of perdition might be the same as the only other referenced person by that designation (II Thess. 2:3), the Anti-Christ/Beast of the Great Tribulation. Some interesting thoughts about that might be found in Revelation 11 where the

two witnesses (Daniel and John?) are personal targets of the son of perdition. If Judas just went **"to his own place"** (Acts 1:25), then the son of perdition might in the future meet in personal hatred, the disciple whom Jesus loved, as John finishes his own ministry (Rev. 10:11). Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP

Roger Reed  
20 Ledgewood Dr.  
Mansfield, Ohio 44905

Missionary of  
West Jefferson  
Missionary Baptist  
Mission  
90 E. Main St.  
West Jefferson, Ohio  
43162



The Scripture or Scriptures that Christ is referencing that **"might be fulfilled"** are:

Psalms 41:9, **"Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."**

Psalms 109:8-9, **"Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow."**

Speaking of course concerning **"the son of perdition,"** Judas Iscariot. **"Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve"** (John 6:70-71).

There are some that believe Judas was saved, but Jesus knew whom He had chosen, and His chosen ones He never calls the devil. Also Christ said in John 13:18, **"I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me,"** which also fulfils

◊ (Continued on page 14)



## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Christ refers the temple to be the house of God in John 2:16. When did the temple cease to be the house of God?

Tom Ross  
6339 County Rd. 15  
South Point, OH  
45680

Pastor  
Mt. Pleasant  
Baptist Church  
6939 County Rd. 15  
Chesapeake, OH  
45619



John 2:16-17 states: **"And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."**

This passage records the righteous indignation of Christ as He expels the money changers from the Temple during the observance of the Passover feast. It is interesting that Jesus refers to the Temple as **"my Father's house."** As the eternally begotten Son of God, Christ Jesus occupied the sacred and unique office as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. The Old Testament Tabernacle and later the Temple, was the Jewish center of worship where the corporate glory of God resided. The Temple was where the veil and the mercy seat resided. It was a place where acceptable sacrifices were offered unto God. Symbolically, it was a sacred place where God dwelt in a special sense.

The Temple, as revealed by its construction, purpose, furniture, and sacrifices symbolically and typically portrayed the coming of Christ in the flesh, as well as His finished work as God's appointed Surety and Redeemer. Jesus

implied as much when He explained to the Jews why He did what He did in John 2:19-22: **"Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said."** Just as the Temple was precisely constructed and maintained for a particular purpose, so also the body of Jesus Christ was exclusively and especially prepared to be the ultimate and final sacrifice to redeem the elect (Luke 1:30-35). Hebrews 10:4-10, 14 state: **"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me; In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By**

**the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all... For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."** Christ's sacrifice on the cross and resurrection from the dead, signified a new and living way whereby the elect may enter into the holiest, into the very presence of God (Heb. 10:19-20). There would be no need to offer the blood of dead animals any longer. Now by virtue of the blood of Jesus Christ the elect have full access to God and acceptance by Him. The Old Testament sacrifices only covered sin symbolically and had to be repeated year after year. In stark contrast the blood of Christ and the holy sacrifice offered by Him actually put away the elect's sins, thus enabling them to have direct access to the Father and the throne of grace (Heb. 4:14-16).

Perhaps when Jesus died on the cross and the veil of the Temple was rent in twain (Matt. 27:50-54), it signified that the Temple would no longer be recognized as the sacred place of atonement and worship. The sacrificial offering of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross where He bore the sins of His people in the human body which was prepared to put away sin, must now be recognized as the only way to God. Hence, the elect are said to be **"accepted in the beloved"** (Eph. 1:6). Christ Himself is the only place of justifying peace, reconciliation to God, and redemption. He alone has opened up the way to God and Heaven as John 14:6 reveals: **"...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me."** All acceptable worship and service must be rendered through our relationship to Him: **"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise**

**to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased"** (Heb. 13:15-16).

TOM ROSS

Matthew Stepp  
286 Big Creek Road  
Wayne, WV 25570

Pastor  
Big Creek  
Baptist Church  
286 Big Creek Road  
Wayne, WV 25570



Dispensationally, the Temple in Jerusalem was prophesied by Christ Himself, to come to an end in John 4:21-24, **"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."** This would come as the Lord in His personal ministry, instituted the body of Christ, the New Testament Church as the place to worship God. **"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"** (1 Tim. 3:15). Selah! Think about it!

Practically, the Temple was finished being the House of God, when Christ fulfilled its pictures on the Cross and shouted **"it is finished"** and rent the Temple veil in twain (Matt. 27:50-51; John 19:30). Access to God's house is now spiritually through Christ and not physically into a building.

♦ (Continued on page 14)

# Forum #1

(Continued from page 12) ♦

prophesy in Psalms 41:9 quoted above.

Acts 1:16-26 fulfils prophesy in Psalms 109:8 (quoted above also) concerning replacing Judas because he held the bag (being the treasurer). **“For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor”** (John 13:29).

One would be hard pressed to prove that Judas Iscariot was saved and that he was not the one Christ was talking about in John 17:12 or the Scriptures I have given are not the ones Christ was referencing too. God Bless!

ROGER REED

Tom Ross  
6339 County Rd. 15  
South Point, OH  
45680

Pastor  
Mt. Pleasant  
Baptist Church  
6939 County Rd. 15  
Chesapeake, OH  
45619



John 17:12 declares: **“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.”**

This verse is contained in a most sacred part of Holy Scripture as it records the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is “God manifest in the flesh.” Jesus clearly states that He had successfully kept all of the elect apostles, which numbered only 11. What the Lord says about His preservation of the apostles may be also said about all the elect in light of what He had already previously stated (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:16,

27-30). None of God’s elect, chosen by the Father before the world began, redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, can lose the Lord’s salvation. Once eternal life is received by the elect and Christ’s righteousness is imputed to them, neither can or will be taken away or abolished according to Isaiah 51:6 which states: **“Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: BUT MY SALVATION SHALL BE FOR EVER, AND MY RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL NOT BE ABOLISHED”** (Emphasis mine, TWR). The Holy Spirit indwells the elect; sanctifying, preserving, and sealing them as Ephesians 1:13-14 reveals: **“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”** Make no mistake about it, God’s elect will persevere by the preserving power of God. There is no possibility of someone who is truly saved to lose the Lord’s salvation.

It is interesting that our Lord does not use the word except, instead using the word **“but”** when referring to the son of perdition, Judas Iscariot. Like many other places in Scripture the use of the word **“but”** is to demonstrate a stark contrast. The apostles who were kept by the power of Christ were chosen, redeemed, and secure as God’s elect. **“But”**

on the other hand, and in stark contrast, Judas, also referred to by Jesus as **“a devil”** (John 6:70-7) who would ultimately betray Him (John 13:18) was not given to Christ to save. Judas was never numbered among God’s elect, although he was an apostle and one of the charter members of the first Baptist church formed by Christ during His earthly ministry. Judas was a reprobate, an object of God’s wrath.

As to the phrase **“that the scripture might be fulfilled,”** I think there is a two fold application. First, the Scriptures referenced above regarding the ultimate preservation of God’s elect could apply. Secondly, and perhaps the primary application, has reference to Old Testament Scripture that predicts the betrayal and judgment of Judas Iscariot. Psalm 41:9 states: **“Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.”** Psalm 109:7-9 declares: **“When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin. Let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office.”**

TOM ROSS



# Forum #2

(Continued from page 13) ♦

**“And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken...”** (I Sam. 4:21). Pictorially, we have a couple of examples when the LORD chooses to remove His presence from the house of God in the various dispensations and metaphorically writes **“Ichabod”** over the door. Ezekiel was given a vision over the period

of several chapters, that showed the Shekinah glory of God departing from Solomon’s Temple before its literal destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. **“Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD’S glory”** (Ezek. 10:4). **“Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims. And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD’S house; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above”** (Ezek. 10:18-19). **“And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city”** (Ezek. 11:23).

Christ, the Shekinah Prince (John 1:14; Matt 17:2) came at the first advent to dwell in the Temple, as prophesied by Haggai, **“And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts”** (Hag. 2:7). **“The glory of this latter house (Herod’s Temple-tms) shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts”** (Hag. 2:9).

But, it is not until Ezekiel is prophesying of the end of the Great Tribulation and the millennial temple, that the Shekinah glory of the Lord is to return to Jerusalem and make the Israeli temple again, the temple of God. **“And, behold, the glory**

♦ (Continued on page 15)

## Forum #2

(Continued from page 14) ♦

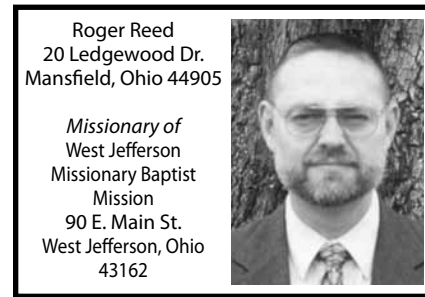
of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory" (Ezek. 43:2). **"And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house"** (Ezek. 43:4-5). And the millennial temple will also be overcome with glory as the Messianic Prince of Israel enters through the Eastern gate.

The other picture is seen in the New Testament age, when the Lord commands His churches to remain pure. Realistically, the Lord will not dwell in a house of rebellion, nor will He authorize a house of disorder and heresy. **"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent"** (Rev. 2:5). Again, the light is representative of the presence of the Holy One. If the Lord's Baptist churches stray like the children of Israel, we, too, can find Ichabod written over our doors, as the candlestick is removed. The Laodicean Baptist church found Jesus Christ on the outside "threshold" of their sanctuary, knocking on the door.

Ultimately, in the eternal ages, the presence/person of God will be our Temple. **"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem..."** (Rev. 21:1-2). **"And I saw no temple**

**therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it"** (Rev. 21:22). Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



Paul says in I Corinthians 3:16-19 that we are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells there. He also said in II Corinthians 5:1, **"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."** Let the reader read on. Other Scripture to consider (Acts 7:48; Hebrews 9:11, 24).

But the question is when did the temple cease to be the house of God? I will answer it this way and then elaborate on it somewhat. The temple ceased to be the house of God when this happened (in my opinion); **"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom"** (Matt. 27:50-51). We no longer need the priest to go into the temple, into the Holy of Holies; we have direct access now for ourselves to go to the very Throne of God.

Though I believe, too, (there are some that disagree with the exact starting) that when Jesus called the very first disciple His church was started (Matt. 4:18-22). I believe this is when the church was instituted by Christ. Others believe it was in I Corinthians 12:28, **"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles,**

**secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."** I would not argue the fact because either would be correct. Always remembering that the church (Christ's Bride) is not a building.

Jesus tells us in Matthew concerning those who trespass against a brother to tell it to the church, **"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican"** (Matt. 18:17). So there was an existing church to do the Lord's business. Baptists, as far as I know, still refer to the church building as the house of God. "I am going to the house of God on Sunday," I am going to church on Sunday" (same meaning I believe)? These statements, true or not, still refer to the building as the house of God, even though it is not. If there was not any building, I would still say, "I'm going to church on Sunday." Jesus said, **"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"** (Matt. 18:20). So if we assemble under a tree or in a field we have **"an house not made with hands"** (II Cor. 5:1).

I hope I did not beat around the bush too much in answering the question. God Bless!

ROGER REED



## Forgiveness

(Continued from page 11) ♦

grace, we are as wrong as the devil! If ever we credit in the least little way something that we have done, or think that we deserve forgiveness, we are blinder than the blindest blind man to whom

our wonderful Lord ever gave sight! Pride and forgiveness are sworn enemies, and cannot abide in the same country, let alone the same house, without a conflict ensuing. The forgiveness which we have received is not owing to our need of it, nor to our having been brought to the place where we pleaded for it. God would have been in His rights to demand what was owed Him from us, and not grant forgiveness – the forgiveness of sins is the gift of His heart (Eph. 1:7).

By some reckoning, what the forgiven servant was owed by his fellow servant amounts to about fourteen dollars. In any case, it was incomparable to the debt he had been forgiven by his compassionate lord. Do we not see that the offences which our brethren commit against us are trifles in comparison of that by which we offended God? Do we not see that the great measure by which we have been forgiven is to be the rule of our forgiveness toward others? If our hearts are not moved by what God has done for us, then they are grown cold indeed! Are we not charged with the debt of love, so that all our thoughts, words, and deeds toward others are to be based in Christ-like love (John 13:34-35 I John 4:19-21; 5:1-5)? Forgiveness comes from love. If we love someone else, we want to be reconciled to them. That was the motive in the previous lesson concerning the responsibility of the church and church members when one called a brother has offended. The object is to gain thy brother! "To be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay" is the language of our church covenant, which we

♦ (Continued on page 16)

# Forgiveness

(Continued from page 15) ♦

believe expresses the teachings of the Scriptures quite aptly.

Notice that we are commanded to forgive. We are commanded to love one another, and we are commanded to forgive one another. This is the law of our great and gracious King, and of His heavenly Father, who we, as dear children, are called to imitate. His commandments are not grievous if we love Him, because then we love to do as He commands. Why would I want to displease Him who has done so much for me, and whose love has made me free from the pain, penalty, power, and putrefying repugnance of my own sins?

Notice that God is concerned with our hearts. It is the heart of the matter that God is after. God is no hypocrite, and He will not abide hypocrisy in His children. Our King is no hypocrite. Has He ever said and not done? Has He ever pledged and not performed? Has He ever commanded others to do what He Himself was unwilling to do? Has He ever laid a burden upon someone that He has not first borne Himself, and that He does not bear with them all along as they bear it for His sake?

"Is thy heart right with God?"



THE

## BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

## WYOMING GETS FIRST PRO-LIFE LEGISLATION SINCE 1989

(WNS)--Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead signed two pro-life bills into law on March 9, the first abortion regulation approved in the deeply red state in nearly three decades. H.B. 182 requires abortionists to notify a woman she is entitled to see an "active ultrasound" of her unborn baby and, if possible, listen to the heartbeat. The bill makes exceptions for danger to the mother's life. H.B. 116 makes it a felony to sell, transfer, or distribute tissue or cells from an aborted baby for the purpose of experimentation.

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## 'JUMPING GENES' FURTHER DEBUNK EVOLUTION

(WNS)--A discovery by Swiss scientists assigns a purpose to previously misunderstood portions of human DNA and evidences the work of complex, precise design in the universe. Within the human body are millions of mysterious little pieces of genetic material called jumping genes. For a long time, scientists considered these little hoppers to be useless bits of junk DNA. But the recent discovery in Switzerland shows these far-from-useless jumping genes, scientifically called transposable elements or TEs, play a vital role in human physiology. The researchers hail their discovery, published in the journal Nature, as evidence of an evolutionary process of "previously unimagined complexity and elegance in genetics."

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## STUDENT SUES SCHOOL OVER GIRL IN BOYS' LOCKER ROOM

(WNS)--A high school junior is suing his Boyertown, Pa., school district after administrators told him he could either "tolerate" having a biological female share his locker room or withdraw and be homeschooled. The lawsuit filed March 21 in federal court calls on the district to rescind its secretly implemented policy granting transgender students access to the private facilities of their choice. Without notifying parents or students, administrators at Boyertown Area School District initiated the policy midway through last semester. The complainant, cited as Joel Doe in court documents, knew nothing about the plan when he began changing clothes for PE class in October.

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## TWENTY-TWO STATES JOIN FIGHT FOR ALABAMA'S DISMEMBERMENT ABORTION BAN

(WNS)--Conservative states and pro-life groups are flocking to support Alabama's effort to reinstate its ban on late-term dismemberment abortions, a law blocked by a federal judge last summer. Alabama outlawed the procedure in May, joining four other states attempting to ban "dilation and evacuation," the most common abortion method used in advanced stages of fetal development. It requires abortionists to dilate a mother's cervix, tear the baby apart bit by bit,

and reassemble the pieces to ensure they have removed everything. "It is just as gruesome and just as horrible as partial-birth abortion," Liberty Counsel's Mat Staver told me. Partial-birth abortion, banned nationwide by Congress in 2003, involved sucking out a baby's brains through a hole in the base of its skull while it was still in the mother's birth canal. The Supreme Court upheld the ban in 2007.

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## ALABAMA LAWMAKER WANTS TO NIX MARRIAGE LICENSES

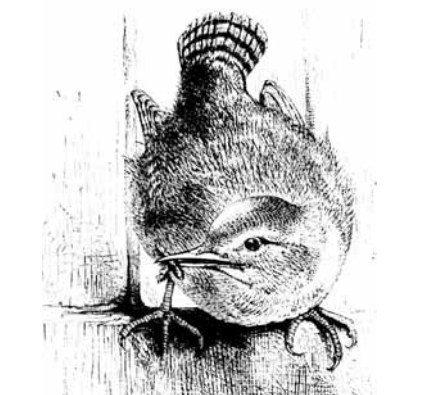
(WNS)--Alabama is considering a law that would abolish marriage licenses in the state. The proposed bill, sponsored by Republican state Sen. Greg Albritton, amends Alabama law to remove any requirement that couples obtain marriage licenses or have marriage ceremonies. Albritton said the law would protect the religious liberty of probate judges and clergy who have moral objections to signing same-sex marriage licenses while also avoiding likely litigation. Instead, under the proposed bill, couples would file signed affidavits with a probate judge, who would be required to record, but not authorize or condone, marriages.

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## CONFLICTING ECONOMIC REPORTS SPOTLIGHT NORTH CAROLINA RESTROOM LAW

(WNS)--North Carolina's controversial restroom law could cost the state \$3.76 billion in lost business over the next 12 years, according to an analysis by the Associated Press. That figure is based on businesses that already announced departures from North Carolina, including PayPal, Adidas, and CoStar, as well as canceled sporting events, conventions, and concerts. But the law's supporters maintain the state economy continues to thrive and

♦ (Continued on page 17)





# Bible & the Newspaper

(Continued from page 16) ♦

insist the lost business is a drop in the bucket of the state's overall GDP. Proponents hope other states, such as Texas, will not balk at adopting similar restroom policies based on media hype.

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## CALIFORNIA AG FILES FELONY CHARGES AGAINST PRO-LIFE ACTIVISTS

(WNS)--California Attorney General Xavier Becerra filed 15 felony charges against pro-life activists David Daleiden and Sandra Merritt on March 28, alleging they illegally recorded conversations during their 2015 undercover investigation of Planned Parenthood and its connection to the fetal tissue trade. In April 2015, authorities raided Daleiden's home and seized thousands of video files related to the undercover investigation by the Center for Medical Progress (CMP). An investigator who viewed 2,300 of the files determined Daleiden and Merritt illegally recorded the conversations of 14 individuals between 2014 and 2015 and committed one count each of conspiracy to invade privacy. In a statement on the CMP website, Daleiden called the charges "bogus." But a conviction could come with a \$35,000 price tag and up to a year in prison for each defendant.

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## SENATE VOTES TO LET STATES DEFUND PLANNED PARENTHOOD

(WNS)--Vice President Mike Pence broke a tie in the Senate on March 30 to overrule an Obama administration rule that forced states to finance Planned Parenthood. Days before President Barack Obama vacated the White House, he ordered the Department of Health and Human Services to block 13 conservative states from

denying Planned Parenthood Title X funding. Using the Congressional Review Act, which grants Congress the ability to disapprove a new federal agency rule within 60 days of its passage, the House voted last month to overrule Obama. But the resolution nearly died in the Senate, where Republicans have a 52-48 majority. With two Senate Republicans joining Democrats to block the resolution, Pence cast the tie-breaking vote to give states back the option—pending the president's signature—to deny Title X funds to abortion providers.

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## GOODBYE, SPERM AND EGG

(WNS)--Some scientists want to rework the ethical guidelines for research on human embryos as the possibility of artificially creating them moves closer to reality. A few weeks ago, researchers at Cambridge University in Britain announced they had engineered mouse embryos from two different types of stem cells rather than from an egg and sperm like normally developing embryos. The discovery raises questions about how researchers would approach the same technique using human tissue. Human embryonic research is already fraught with ethical problems because it involves the destruction of human life. Artificially creating embryos does not change that, said David Prentice, vice president and research director for the Charlotte Lozier Institute.

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## NORTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR SIGNS HB2 REPEAL

(WNS)--North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper on March 30 signed into law the legislation that revises HB2. Among other things, it repeals the provision of HB2 that requires people in schools and government buildings to use the public restrooms and locker rooms that correspond to the sex on their birth certificate.

"Today's law immediately removes that restriction. It is gone," Cooper said. Late on March 29, North Carolina Senate leader Phil Berger worked with State House Speaker Tim Moore, a fellow Republican, to broker a deal with Cooper. Both sides admit the legislation is not perfect but look forward to easing the tension HB2 created.

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## AIRMAN FACES CENSURE OVER SUPPORT FOR BIBLICAL MARRIAGE

(WNS)--A 26-year U.S. Air Force veteran is battling an official admonishment from his commanding officer over allegedly disparaging remarks he made about homosexuality more than four years ago. A letter of admonition detailing the accusation, filed with no warning or opportunity for Col. Michael Madrid to respond, is a stain on the decorated airman's record and could cost him future promotions, his attorney said. Maj. Gen. John McCoy, then-acting commander of Air Education and Training Command (AETC) at Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio, filed the 2016 letter of admonishment indicating he had new information in a two-year-old settled and closed investigation of Madrid from another base. Mike Berry, an attorney with First Liberty representing Madrid, said he is at a loss as to why McCoy acted on the closed case or how he even knew about it. Berry said McCoy's actions violate military and federal law denying Madrid due process. Berry has demanded the admonition letter be rescinded.

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## FEDERAL COURT'S REDEFINITION OF 'SEX' COULD HAVE WIDE RIPPLE EFFECTS

(WNS)--The 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals issued a landmark ruling this week that redefines the term "sex" in the 1964 Civil Rights

Act to include "sexual orientation." Gay rights advocates declared the ruling a "game changer" in their press to establish homosexuality as a protected class under federal law. Religious liberty attorneys decried the decision as judicial activism that could put faith-based ministries in the legal crosshairs of disgruntled gay employees for years to come. In the 8-3 decision issued April 4, the appeals court ruled contrary to its own precedent and every U.S. appeals court to date, including the 11th Circuit which just weeks earlier came to the opposite conclusion in a similar case. The lawsuit before the 7th Circuit, Hively v. Ivy Tech, involved a lesbian who sued her employer for sex discrimination claiming she did not get a full-time job because of her sexuality. In her complaint, Kimberly Hively cited Title VII as her defense. In doing so she forced the court to decide whether sexual orientation means the same thing as sex.

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## MARRIAGE IS STILL THE GOLD STANDARD OF FAMILY STABILITY

(WNS)--Yet another research study published recently showed marriage was superior to cohabitation for providing family stability across the demographics spectrum. The study, "The Cohabitation-Go-Around: Cohabitation and Family Instability Across the Globe," published by the Social Trends Institute and the Institute for Family Studies, found marriage provided significantly more stability for children than cohabiting, regardless of education level or geography. Cohabiting parents split up twice as often as married parents, according to the data. And children who experienced their parents' breakups and then additional family transitions also reported more unhappiness, school disruptions, and teen pregnancies.

♦ (Continued on page 18)

# Bible & the Newspaper

(Continued from page 17) ♦

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## INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS WHAT'S DRIVING MUSLIM REFUGEES TO CHRISTIANITY?

(WNS)--Hundreds of Muslim refugees have converted to Christianity across Europe in recent years, according to church leaders, but motives vary. In Austria, the rolls of Catholic churches swelled with Muslim immigrants, leading to new guidelines for baptism to ensure sincere faith. Other churches in Lebanon, Germany, and England also report growing numbers of Muslim refugee converts from Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Iraq, Bangladesh, and Eritrea. Bishop George Saliba of Beirut, Lebanon, told PRI he has baptized about 100 Syrian refugees since 2011. In another Beirut church, a pastor meets with Syrian refugees to teach them "Christian doctrines" from Scripture. He requested anonymity out of fear of Islamist reprisals but said dozens of Bible study groups for Syrian refugees now meet in Lebanon. No national statistics exist, but many local churches across Europe attest to the influx of Muslim refugees seeking to become Christians. Still, they remain a small fraction of the millions of Muslims in Europe.

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## MORE THAN 20 MILLION IN AFRICA, MIDDLE EAST AT RISK OF STARVATION

(WNS)--Aid groups and government officials in famine-hit parts of Africa and the Middle East are calling for more global attention to a crisis that has left more than 20 million people at risk of starvation. The United Nations earlier this month said the world is facing its worst humanitarian crisis since the end of World War II. More than 20 million people across conflict-hit regions in South Sudan, Somalia,

northeastern Nigeria, and Yemen are at risk of famine and starvation. The rising needs and worsening conditions have left several aid groups and government officials scrambling for resources.

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## CANADA IS HARVESTING THE ORGANS OF EUTHANASIA PATIENTS

(WNS)--A recent push in Canada to encourage euthanasia patients to donate their organs is working. In Ontario, the first province to report data, 26 people who died by lethal injection decided to donate tissue or organs since the Medical Aid in Dying Act (MAID) came into effect last June, according to the National

Post. A total of 388 people have chosen to die by lethal injection in Ontario, over half of the 744 total Canadians who have been euthanized. Canadian ethicists Julie Allard and Marie-Chantal Fortin encouraged the joining of euthanasia with organ harvesting in an article in December's Journal of Medical Ethics. But even supporters acknowledge the potential unintended consequences. Allard and Fortin warned in their article that encouraging organ harvesting could put pressure on those diagnosed with terminal illness to consider assisted suicide as an alternative sense of purpose.



## From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell  
(1941 - 2002)



## One Desire

**"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple" (Ps. 27:4).**

God has endowed each of us with a human soul which has desires. In this we differ from the beasts of the field who have but few desires. This ability must be carefully guarded and kept in the right channel. Our desires can be holy or unholy (Gen. 3:6; Eph. 2:3). The one desire of the psalmist David was a holy desire. One that should be found in the heart of every true believer. The Bible discloses that God judges us by the desires of our heart.

### UNITY OF DESIRE

The text begins with the words: **"One thing have I desired of**

**the LORD. . ."**

One thought had the mastery. One passion gave unity and concentration to all other things. There was one craving he entreated Jehovah to grant. This was the ruling desire of the heart of the man after God's own heart.

During the Absalom rebellion (when I believe this psalm was written), David was evidently debarred access to the tabernacle worship. When he fled Jerusalem he left behind him his house, some of his family, his treasurers, and all the glory of his crown (II Sam. 15:25). But all of these things were as nothing compared with his desire to worship God in Jerusalem.

David often spoke of his love for the place of public worship. **"LORD, I have loved the**

**habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth" (Ps. 26:8). "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary" (Ps. 63:1-2). "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Ps. 84:10).**

If you had only one desire, what would it be? Would you desire to explore outer space in a rocket? Would you desire to travel around the world and see its sights? Perhaps you would desire all the gold in Fort Knox, Kentucky? Maybe you would desire to be a famous man or woman in history? How few would desire that every day be Sunday and that they constantly remain in the place of public worship as David did?

The psalmist desired communion and fellowship with Jehovah in His tabernacle. Although he was fleeing for his life, he did not even desire his own personal safety. If a true believer has God's presence, he can desire no more. That **"one thing"** (Luke 10:42) is enough to satisfy him for time and eternity. A spiritually minded man has only one wish and no more. He would say, "Grant me Thyself, O Jehovah, and I will ask no more." The greatness of this one desire is proof of true greatness in a person.

### EARNEST ACTION

King David continues by saying: **". . .that will I seek after. . ."** It is not sufficient to desire without seeking. Holy desires lead to holy actions. Desires are seeds which must be sown in the good soil of activity; otherwise, they will yield

♦ (Continued on page 19)

# One Desire

(Continued from page 18) ♦

no harvest. Unless our desires have a practical effect upon us, they are clouds without water and trees without fruit. Those who truly desire the public worship of God will diligently seek after it. Jehovah told Israel: **"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart"** (Jer. 29:13). The church is pictured in the Song of Solomon as saying: **"I will seek him whom my soul loveth"** (3:2).

It was the duty of faithful Israelites to seek to engage in public worship of the living God: **"But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come"** (Deut. 12:5). Blessings were promised to those who did this (Lam. 3:25). New Testament worshippers are to seek God (Col. 3:1), and they are equally promised blessings (Heb. 11:6). It is sad that many under the old dispensation (Ps. 14:2), as well as the new (Rom. 3:11), do not seek God. To the Philippians Paul said: **"For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's"** (Phil. 2:21).

The worship of God in truth and in Spirit is to be earnestly and determinately sought. We must seek it out until we find it (Matt. 7:7). It is the duty of Christians to seek out a true church where they may worship God and pay their tithes. In these days of the great apostasy it is often difficult to find a true church and a true minister of the gospel. He who professes to know Christ and makes no attempt to find a sound church is sound asleep spiritually. **"Wherefore he saith, Awake**

**thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil"** (Eph. 5:14-16).

## THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

The psalmist mentions in my text **"the house of the LORD."** What are we to understand by this expression? The term is first used of a stone at Bethel where Jacob worshipped God (Gen. 28:17, 22). Later the house of Jehovah designated the tabernacle (Jud. 18:31; 20:18, 26; Matt. 12:4). Later still the title is used of the first temple (I Chron. 22:1-19; 29:2-16; II Chron. 5:14) and the second temple (Ezra 5:8, 15; Neh. 6:10; 13:11).

When we come to the New Testament the **"house of God"** is the church which Jesus built during His earthly ministry. Writing to young Timothy, Paul said: **"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"** (I Tim. 3:15). **"And having an high priest over the house of God. . ."** (Heb. 10:21). Peter said: **"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God. . ."** (I Pet. 4:17; cf. 2:5; I Cor. 3:9). In some other verses the house of Christ is the New Testament church (Mark 13:34; Heb. 3:6). In this age if you want to see God, go to His house.

The tabernacle and temple were called the **"house of God"** in the Old Testament because they were the earthly dwelling place of God (Ex. 15:17). With reference to construction of the tabernacle, the Lord told Moses: **"And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and**

**in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel"** (Ex. 25:21-22; cf. Num. 35:34; II Sam. 7:5). Jehovah dwelt in the same place in the temple of Solomon (I Kings 6:13; 8:12-13). In this age the New Testament church is the dwelling place of God. To the church at Corinth Paul said: **"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are"** (I Cor. 3:16-17; cf. II Cor. 6:16). Paul told the Ephesian church: **"In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit"** (Eph. 2:22).

The house of God in the old dispensation was the place where the Lord's glory was seen. When the tabernacle was completed it is written: **"Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle"** (Ex. 40:34). When Solomon finished the temple it is written: **" . . . then the house was filled with a cloud; even the house of the LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God"** (II Chron. 5:13-14). After Christ organized His church and replaced one of the twelve apostles the glory of God filled the church: **"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of**

**a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting"** (Acts 2:1-2).

The house of God in the Old Testament was not some universal, invisible congregation of Israelites, some dead, some alive, and some not born. It was a congregation in one place where faithful Israelites attended public worship. The psalmist said: **"I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday"** (Ps. 42:4). Again he wrote: **"We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company"** (Ps. 55:14). Still again: **"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD"** (Ps. 122:1; cf. Eccl. 5:1). When Hezekiah was sick he desired to recover, not that he might go up to this throne, but so he could **"go up to the house of the LORD"** (Isa. 38:22). In the old dispensation it was an awful sin to forsake the house of God (Neh. 13:11).

In the New Testament the church is a local assembly of scripturally baptized believers which meet in a certain place (Acts 2:1; I Cor. 11:20; 14:23; Rev. 2:5). To neglect to attend the services of the church is an awful sin: **"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"** (Heb. 10:25).

The tabernacle (and later the temple) was the place where devout Israelites brought their tithes and offerings: **"But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt**

♦ (Continued on page 20)

# One Desire

(Continued from page 19) ♦

**come: And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks**" (Deut. 12:5-6; cf. vv. 11, 13-14). God told the people in Malachi's day: **"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it"** (Mal. 3:10).

In the New Testament devoted Christians are to bring their tithes and offerings to God's house, the New Testament church: **"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings (collections) when I come"** (I Cor. 16:1-2). The words here are addressed to the **"churches"** (v. 1). This command does not include what is now being called "the electric church." Like the universal, invisible church, "the electric church" is no church at all. Both of these mythical churches exist only in the mind of a heretic. There is no Scripture which commands us to send a part of our tithe to some radio preacher, or TV evangelist, or some Christian school. Your tithe belongs to the local church where you are a member.

## NEARNESS OF COMMUNION

David longed to be like the

priests who continually dwelled in the tabernacle: **"That I may dwell in the house of the LORD."** The priests were duty bound to **"minister in the house of"** the Lord (Neh. 10:36). Even the porters and singers were continually serving God in His house (Neh. 10:39). The psalmist was saying how wonderful to be a servant of God in the house of God. Oh, to be near God and to have sweet friendship and fellowship with Him daily!

The person who would seek a true disciple of Christ will find him in company of God's people in God's house. A Christian desires to be in the place where God especially manifests His presence. There he is free from those who would disturb his communion with God. In the services of the church he has the satisfaction of thinking himself as being in the company of his dearest and best Friend. Time never lies heavy upon him, and he desires that every day would be a church service. Hypocrites are clockwatchers at church and desire that the preacher cut it short so they can go home and do something they really enjoy.

Those privileged to live in this age can indeed have sweet communion with Christ in a more definite sense than those of former ages, for we have the Lord's Supper. We sometimes call it communion. To the Corinthian church Paul wrote: **"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"** (I Cor. 10:16). The cup of wine we drink at the Lord's table is a symbol and token of the fellowship or communion we have with the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. The unleavened bread we eat

declares that we spiritually partake of Christ's body. Never is communion between Christ and His people better, or sweeter, than when they partake of these two emblems.

How sad that some professed Christians have no desire to faithfully attend the house of God and have sweet communion with their Lord. The man who does not have enough religion to take him to church does not have enough to take him to Heaven. Even a wayfaring man, though a fool, knows, if a man's religion will not take him a few miles down the road to the church services, it cannot take him from earth to Heaven. Bede so well said: "He who comes not willingly to church, shall one day go unwillingly to Hell."

## DURATION OF ATTENDANCE

The psalmist desired that he might daily attend the public worship of God with other faithful Israelites. He wished the strife would end so he might have leisure and liberty for a constant attendance in God's courts **"all the days of"** his life. Faithful, life-long attendance to the church of God is the universal duty of all believers in Jesus Christ.

Quite often I hear of some man or woman who got offended at the church by some one. Maybe it was the preacher, or a deacon, or a Sunday school teacher, or some other member. Such a person often sets at home Sunday after Sunday to pout about this real or imaginary offense. Some go so far as to quit the church and to never return to its services. What is the spiritual condition of such a person? I John 2:19 tells us: **"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be**

**made manifest that they were not all of us."** Those who do not persevere in church attendance throughout their lifetime on earth may very well not be possessors of eternal life.

## THE HEAVENLY DELIGHT

David wanted to continually dwell in the place of public worship **"to behold the beauty of the LORD."** It would seem from the Scriptures that the beauty of the Lord is holiness. It is said of Jehoshaphat: **"And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever"** (II Chron. 20:21). David said: **"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness"** (I Chron. 16:29; cf. Ps. 29:1; 96:9). This is also why it is written that holiness becomes God's house for ever (Ps. 93:5).

In my text we learn what true worship really is. It is **"to behold the beauty of the LORD."** When a person goes to church he or she should hear the Sunday school teacher or the preacher presenting the nature and attributes of God. Churchgoers should be taught the God of the Bible. From Sunday to Sunday, the greatness, the majesty, the sovereignty, and the supremacy of God should be put forth in plain language. Especially His holiness must be taught. Even the hymns should reflect these glorious truths. I pity some churchgoers who from week to week hear only about a defeated and disappointed god who is a failure. Such a god is not beautiful, but ugly. He is not worthy of worship, but of pity.

♦ (Continued on page 21)



# One Desire

(Continued from page 20) ♦

We must not enter the church to see and be seen, or to merely hear the preacher, or to make business contacts, or to get elected to political office. We are to gather with the saints to see the King in His beauty. The attractiveness of the character of God should take us to church. We must go to see more of the several perfections of God, which co-exist and unite in His nature, to produce a glorious beauty. When the attributes of God are properly preached to the people they can say: **"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other"** (Ps. 85:10).

## PROGRESS IN DIVINE EDUCATION

King David desired to constantly dwell in God's house **"to enquire in his temple."** The psalmist was an anxious inquirer, seeking the truth of God's own lips. We should make our visits to church inquirer's meetings. We must go to learn more of God and our duty to Him. I will not need to make inquiries in Heaven, for **"then shall I know even as also I am known"** (I Cor. 13:12). But while I remain on earth I need to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him. I am to frequent His house to learn about all things He has commanded me to observe and do (Matt. 28:19-20).

Truth is not born with us, nor can we obtain it irrespective of our own efforts. Jesus said: **"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."** (John 7:17). Truth must be sought for its own sake: **"Buy the truth, and sell it not"** (Prov. 23:23). Truth must be won and wooed from love that it may be a possession and joy for ever. All right inquiry is practical: **"If ye**

**know these things, happy are ye if ye do them"** (John 13:17).

A church member has the right to expect the difficulties of the Bible to be opened up to him by his pastor. Malachi 2:7 reads: **"For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts."** One of the qualifications of a pastor is that he be **"apt to teach"** (I Tim. 3:2). Galatians 6:6 tells us: **"Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."** I have known of some preachers who are offended when their members ask them Bible questions, fearful they did not know the correct answers. To be able to teach and answer questions about the Bible requires much study (II Tim. 2:15), and this some preachers are not willing to do as **"much study is a weariness of the flesh"** (Eccl. 12:12). Therefore, their members must remain in spiritual infancy because their pastor is only a mere babe in Christ.

## CONCLUSION

1. What is your one desire? Is it to abide in the house of God continually? Do you love the church as much as David did the tabernacle? How does your love for the house of God compare with his?

2. Why do you go to church? Is it to see and be seen? to doze and nod? Or, do you go to see the loveliness of the Lord?

3. Sinner, have you ever seen the beauty of God in Christ? Do you see Him as the Father's gift? Christ is the finest spectacle of moral beauty which men and angels ever set their eyes on. Do you know Him as your Savior?



# The True Token

By James Smith  
(1802 - 1862)

**"Give me a true token"** (Joshua 2:12).

This was the request of the harlot Rahab. Jericho was threatened with destruction; its doom was fast approaching; its danger was now imminent; the spies came to her house, and she received them, for she believed that God would give the place into the hands of Israel; her concern for the salvation of herself and family was great and natural; her precaution was wise; she wanted a token, one which she could trust, which would inspire confidence; she asked it, and her request was granted. She used a scarlet-coloured rope to let down the spies, and they said, **"Thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by."** And she collected all her family together into her house, **"and she bound the scarlet line in the window."** This was to mark the house, to remind the spies, to support her hope, and preserve her family. It was visible, being of a scarlet colour; it was useful, being the cord by which the spies escaped. It was the means of the salvation of the family; for when Jericho was destroyed, Joshua said, **"Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her:"** and they did so.

Now let us improve the subject. The world is threatened with destruction, as Jericho was; its doom is fast approaching; the danger is near and imminent; we should be concerned for our safety, and the salvation of those connected with us; we should not

be satisfied with a "Peradventure we may be safe," but should seek **"a true token."** The Lord gives such, many enjoy them, and others possess them without being satisfied respecting them. The life of God in the soul is a true token of safety; if quickened by the Holy Spirit, if God dwells in us, and occupies our thoughts, engages our affections, and separates us from sin and folly, it is a clear proof that we are the Lord's. The fear of the Lord, by which men depart from evil, is also **"a true token."** If a person fears to offend God and desires above every thing to please Him; if, with this end in view, every man is formed, every purpose executed, and every duty attended to, it is a scriptural evidence of union to Christ. The spirit of prayer is also **"a true token."** If we are taught our need of the blessings God has promised, if we experience the irrepressible desire after them; if we are frequently prompted to retire to pray for them; if we are assisted in pleading with God for them, with fervour, zeal, a importunity; if prayer becomes natural to our souls, like breathing to our bodies; if it is our relief in trouble, our solace in sorrow, our delight in joy, and is felt to be our privilege, it is clear that we are born from above. True repentance is **"a true token."** By which we mean heartfelt sorrow for sin, because it is an offence against God and grievous in His sight; accompanied with a loathing of sin and departure from it, on account of its filthiness and evil character. Such repentance is the gift of Jesus, the production of the Holy Spirit, and the distinguishing mark of an Israelite indeed. Faith in Jesus is **"a true token."** That is, not only giving credence to His Word, but resting upon His perfect

♦ (Continued on page 22)

# The True Token

(Continued from page 21) ♦

work for acceptance with God, looking to His mediation as the only ground of hope and comfort, and presenting and pleading His atoning blood before God for all we need. Faith always fastens the scarlet line in the window, or sprinkles the doorposts with the blood of the paschal lamb, that the inhabitants may be safe from the sword of justice and the wrath of God. Love to the saints is **"a true token."** Loving them because they are holy, and because Jesus loves them; loving them though poor, afflicted, persecuted, and despised: loving them so as to be willing to do any thing for them, for Jesus' sake. A holy life, flowing from faith in Christ, is **"a true token."** If we are united to Jesus, the root being holy, we shall be holy too; if Jesus dwells in us, He will sanctify us, and we shall breathe His spirit, imitate His example, and aim at His glory. Reader, have you **"a true token?"** Is it visible as the glowing scarlet, and useful as the cord which let down the spies? Has it secured others, as well as benefited yourself? Are you seeking a true token? If so, follow it up, be not easily satisfied, neither be discouraged. Pray, "Give me a token for good." Is the line in the window? Does the whole family unite?

*"When God's own, arm, His power to shew,  
Threw down the walls of Jericho,  
In Rahab's house was safety found,  
For there the scarlet thread was bound.*

*'Come, kindred, here, make haste,' she cried,  
'Destruction waits on every side:  
No harm shall enter where we dwell,  
The scarlet thread secures us well.'*

*Like Israel safe, whose favour'd door  
Was sprinkled well with paschal gore;  
The sacred sign was just the same,*

*The scarlet thread, or slaughter'd lamb.*

*But we can nobler wanders tell,  
By Jesus' blood redeem'd from hell;  
Secured by this from wrath divine,  
We bless the sacred, peaceful sign."*



## The Short Pews



Brief  
Articles  
by Curtis  
Pugh

### GOD IS COMPLETELY IN CONTROL

There are three different ideas concerning God's control over His creation. Some deny that God is in control at all. If they believe in God they view Him as a sort of absentee landlord who wound up the world like an old clock and left it to run alone. Other people believe that God is only concerned with the important things that happen in the world. The third idea is taught in the Bible and it is that God is absolutely in control of all things, events, and persons.

The Lord Jesus clearly taught that God is in control of all things when He said, **"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered"** (Matt. 10:29). This verse does not say that God knows about the death of each sparrow, but rather the Lord told His disciples that not one of them shall fall to the ground **"without your Father."** God is involved in the tiny details of all things: Jesus told His disciples that even the hairs of their heads were numbered.

Another statement in the Bible

says **"...God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were"** (Rom. 4:17). God resurrects the dead: both the spiritually dead and the physically dead, each in its proper time according to His will. But get this! He calls things that do not exist as if they do exist! Because God is in control of all things and has a plan for all things He can and does speak of them as already accomplished.

Consider this example of that very thing: **"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. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified"** (Rom. 8:28-30).

God, first of all, **"did foreknow,"** (notice that God foreknows some people, He does not just know about these people ahead of time: He knows them). Those whom God knew ahead of time He **"did predestinate"** to be like Jesus. Those thus predestinated were also **"called"** - but those not yet saved are not yet called! Neither are those who are not yet believers justified (declared to be righteous for that comes at the point of faith). And most certainly not all those who are **"justified"** are now **"glorified"** (resurrected and conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ). Yet God speaks of them as if they were already glorified! That is just how secure and sure of eternal salvation are those whom God **"did foreknow."** **"...The Lord knoweth them that are his..."** (II Tim. 2:19).

### CHRISTIANS, GROW UP!

Imagine the concern of parents for a child of theirs that never got beyond nursing: that never progressed to eating solid food. Something is wrong with such a child! No doubt they would take the child to doctors and to specialists to try to remedy its serious problem. How can a child properly develop if he or she never learns to eat nutritious food? It cannot and eventually will wither away with ruined health.

The Holy Ghost through the writer to the Hebrews says "Grow up!": not in those words but in these: **"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil"** (Heb. 5:12-14).

Baby Christians! Undeveloped believers! Milk-sucking saints! Children of God lacking the ability to accept strong doctrinal teaching! Immature church members! Followers of the Lamb who are unable to discern good from evil! Is it any wonder that today's saints are not saintly? Is it any wonder that they are given over to the observance of every idolatrous pagan practice and holiday that is celebrated most anywhere in the world? Most professing Christians cannot discern good from evil and so compromise with everything pleasant that comes down the pike! Not knowing the truth they

♦ (Continued on page 23)

# The Short Pews

(Continued from page 22) ♦

cannot stand for it and so fall for most everything! And sadly, the case is often “like pastor, like people!”

Those addressed in this passage ought to be grown up: mature in the faith. They ought to be able to teach others as the text clearly says, but they are useless. Instead of being a help to their fellows they are spiritual babies and require constant care by others. These folk do not even know the **“first principles of the oracles of God.”** They do not know how God saves sinners! They think the new birth is a result of their actions! They regurgitate (vomit) whenever anyone tries to get them to eat a little solid food. You doubt that? Send them a preacher who mentions such things as election, reprobation, predestination, particular redemption, total depravity and total inability of sinners to please God. Read to them these words: **“Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth”** (Rom. 9:18) and see if the average professing Christian does not vomit all over you: i.e. spiritually speaking. Shame! Shame! Shame! Baby Christians indeed! Grow up! Get on a spiritually healthful diet of solid Bible teaching! Forget the baby stuff and find out what the Bible really says! Read Romans chapter nine for instance and believe what it says! Grow up and become useful!

## THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND

Men have figured out many things. They have developed various philosophies, religions and roads to whatever kind of heaven they have imagined. They are like

blind men in a dark room looking for a black hat that isn't there. God said, **“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”** (Isa. 55:8-9).

A man may be quite sure he is right and be dead wrong! Twice God tells us in the Psalms, **“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”** (Ps. 14:12; 16:25). Again God says, **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it”** (Jer. 17:9)? In spite of men thinking that their ways are the best ways, God says the ideas of man lead to death. Often we hear the advice given to “follow your heart.” When an individual follows his heart he or she is following a deceptive and wicked thing. So wicked and deceitful is the unregenerate man's heart that the individual does not even know the depths of sin and sorrow bound up in it.

Not only is man's way of thinking wrong, but his ways are wrong, his heart is wrong and so also is his mind as he is naturally born. **“...the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be”** (Rom. 8:7). Sinners are not as bad as they could be, but they are as bad off as they could possibly be. They cannot think right. They love the wrong things. Their hearts are wicked and deceitful. And even their mind cannot be subject to the law of God.

And yet some individuals teach others their ways. Groups put their thoughts together: thoughts that spring from their depraved hearts, from their inability to think right because of their carnal

rebellious minds and expect to arrive at truth. They expect to figure out God and how they can save themselves by doing some religious thing which they think will please God and earn for them Heaven.

Jesus spoke of such individuals. He spoke about the most religious people of His day, saying, **“...Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch”** (Matt. 15:13-14). Regardless of educational attainments and intelligence, men and women in their natural state are blind. If they teach others they are blind leaders of the blind. They and their followers shall come to a bad end: in “the ditch.” So it is that men need a divine intervention by the Spirit of God. Jesus said, **“...Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”** (John 3:3).

## HE SHALL GIVE US ALL THINGS

The idea that God gives all things involved with the salvation of sinners without demanding some sort of works is foreign to the natural minds of men. They think that they must “accept the Lord,” or “pray the sinner's prayer,” or “get baptized,” or “get born again,” or “open their heart's door to Jesus” or some such thing in order to be born again.

What I am saying is this: the idea of free grace is foreign to the notions of man-made religions of all sorts. Some say take a bath in the Ganges River, some say make a pilgrimage to Mecca, some say be baptized in our church, etc., etc. The adherents of all popular religions say these things or something similar. “Do this” or

♦ (Continued on page 24)

## BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 3-1-2017 to 3-31-2017

Beginning Balance .....	\$1,588.10
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX .....	50.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	1,300.00
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 .....	300.00
Bruce Allen, Fairmont, GA .....	10.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL .....	25.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY .....	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR .....	12.50
Gail Knowles, Portland, ME .....	20.00
Grace B. C., Rual Hall, 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
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC .....	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY .....	35.00
Morris Floyd, Haysville, KS .....	50.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH .....	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN .....	50.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR .....	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR .....	50.00
Providence B. C., Tupelo, MS .....	200.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS .....	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL .....	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....	25.00
Subscriptions .....	51.00
Anonymous .....	925.00
Dividing checks .....	300.00
Sub Total .....	\$4,636.95
TOTAL .....	\$6,225.05
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Printing .....	490.00
Postage .....	661.06
Wages .....	2,300.00
FICA .....	175.96
Dividing checks .....	300.00
Total Expenditures .....	\$3,927.02
.....	2,298.03
Bank charge .....	-13.00
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$2,285.03



## BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 3-1-2017 to 3-31-2017

Beginning Balance .....	\$5,748.54
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	225.00
Briar Creek, B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	200.00
Calvary I. B. C., Sumas, WA .....	200.00
.....	625.00
TOTAL .....	6,373.54
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Radio Time .....	843.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....	843.98
.....	5,529.56
Interest .....	+0.04
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$5,529.60

# The Short Pews

(Continued from page 23) ♦

“be sincere” or “join our church” or keep the law and you will be born again are some of the claims made. But the message of the Bible is completely at odds with the ideas of men. Thus God said, **“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”** (Prov. 16:25).


Paul in Romans 8:32 wrote: **“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”** Someone said Paul’s is the argument of the mother and the stroller. If you can talk a mother out of her baby, you can talk her out of the stroller to go along with the baby. If she will give up her precious baby, the other things are inconsequential.

Based upon the fact that God did not spare His very own beloved Son, but turned Him over to wicked men to do what God’s **“hand and...counsel determined before to be done”** (Acts 4:28), surely He will give us all things necessary for the Christian life. In God’s plan of salvation Paul said God delivered Christ **“up for us all.”** The **“us”** there, obviously, is not every individual living, dead and yet to be born. He includes himself along with the “saints” or Christians at Rome for those are the people to whom he wrote. But the point is that since God gave up His Son who was the most precious thing to Him, God will with Christ give all things needed to those for whom Christ was given.

God gives: **“freely.”** With Christ God freely gives us all things necessary for the Christian life. He gives first spiritual life, godly sorrow, repentance, faith and so works in us by His Spirit to motivate and enable us to live

for Him. Paul wrote, **“...he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”** (Phil. 1:6). That beginning of a good work is the new birth of which John wrote saying they **“were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”** (John 1:13).





Quotes  
from  
Brother  
Ritechus  
N.  
Dignation  
by Joseph Harris

Most churches today have ceased boldly proclaiming absolute truth and instead have begun weakly offering suggestions. They have stopped crying against sin and have started a dialogue with sinners over the definition of sin. Instead of capturing the world with the gospel, the world has captured the church and diminished the gospel. While peddling prosperity and a better life for the here and now, they have forgotten to preach the hope of eternal life in Christ for the hereafter.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Philadelphia B. C. of Decatur, AL and Pastor Doyal Thomas would like to announce their Summer Revival /Quarterly Fellowship Meeting for June 14th - 18th. Service times are Wednesday thru Friday at 7:00 p.m., Saturday 10:00 a.m., and Sunday 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

The primary speaker will be Elder Nathaniel Hille.

On Saturday Elder Shaun Trescott will be the additional speaker and a noon meal will be provided.

All are invited to attend.

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The Windsor Baptist Church in Windsor, IL is seeking a qualified candidate for pastor. We are a sovereign grace independent Baptist church, small in number but rich in truth. We are seeking a candidate qualified for the position as described in I Timothy 3. Any interested potential candidate please contact Brother John Gregory at windsorbaptist.grace@gmail.com or phone 217-728-8311.

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The Landmark Baptist Church in Moncks Corner, South Carolina, is without a pastor. The members of this local New Testament church

would like to make a request to pastors and members of other New Testament churches: do you have a man in your membership that believes the Lord is calling him to the ministry, and if so, would he consider relocating to this area and work in the church here teaching the truth of God’s Word? It is our prayer that the Lord will send as He did in the church at Antioch. Even though we are without a pastor, we would carefully consider the one who the Lord God sends as pastor after the church has observed areas of qualification that are mentioned in First Timothy 3. For answers to questions you may have, please contact Brother Andrew Cook at [acook1947@gmail.com](mailto:acook1947@gmail.com).

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

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

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

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

## ARTICLE INDEX

A Lamp Unto Our Feet by Paul Stepp .....	p. 1
The Bible and the Newspaper .....	p. 16
Forgiveness by Timothy J. Hille .....	p. 1
Forum .....	pp. 12-13
Know God and Live Forever by Rosco Brong .....	p. 1
Little Hills by Nathaniel Hille .....	p. 3
Many Shall Come in My Name by Curtis Pugh .....	p. 1
One Desire by Milburn Cockrell .....	p. 18
The Short Pews .....	p. 22
The True Token by James Smith .....	p. 21
What Are We Created For? by Matthew Stepp .....	p. 1